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ALAIN RENÉ LE SAGE

THE ADVENTURES

OF

GIL BLAS

OF SANTILLANE

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY TOBIAS SMOLLETT

PRECEDED BY

A BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL NOTICE OF LE SAGE

BY GEORGE SAINTSBURY

With Twelve Original Etchings by R. de Los Rios

IN THREE VOLUMES—VOL. III.

LONDON
J. C. NIMMO AND BAIN
14, KING WILLIAM STREET, STRAND, W.C.
1881

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Only 100 *Copies of this Edition on laid paper, medium 8vo, with proof Etchings on Japanese paper, have been printed, and are numbered consecutively as issued.*

No. 93

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HISTORY OF GIL BLAS

OF SANTILLANE.

BOOK THE EIGHTH.—(CONTINUED).

CHAPTER VIII.

HISTORY OF DON ROGER DE RADA.

Don Anastasio de Rada, a gentleman of Grenada, was living happily in the town of Antequera, with Donna Estephania his wife, who united every charm of person and mind with the most unquestionable virtue. If her affection was lively towards her husband, his love for her was violent beyond all bounds. He was naturally prone to jealousy; and though wantonness could never assume such a semblance as his wife's, his thoughts were not quite at rest upon the subject. He was apprehensive lest some secret enemy to his repose might make some attempt upon his honor. His eye was turned askance upon all his friends, except Don Huberto de Hordales, who frequented the house without suspicion in quality of Estephania's cousin, and was the only man in whom he ought not to have confided.

Don Huberto did actually fall in love with his

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cousin, and ventured to make his sentiments known, in contempt of consanguinity and the ties of friendship. The lady, who was considerate, instead of making an outcry which might have led to fatal consequences, reproved her kinsman gently, represented to him the extreme criminality of attempting to seduce her and dishonor her husband, and told him very seriously that he must not flatter himself with the most distant hope.

This moderation only inflamed the seducer's appetite the more. Taking it for granted that, as a woman who had been accustomed to save appearances, she only wanted to be more strongly urged, he began to adopt little freedoms of more warmth than delicacy, and had the assurance one day to put the question home to her. She repulsed him with unbridled indignation, and threatened to refer the punishment of his offence to Don Anastasio. Her suitor, alarmed at such an intimation, promised to drop the subject; and Estephania, in the candor of her soul, forgave him for the past.

Don Huberto, a man totally devoid of principle, could not feel his passion to be foiled without entertaining a mean spirit of revenge. He knew the weak side of Don Anastasio's temper. This was enough to engender the blackest design that ever scoundrel plotted. One evening, as he was walking alone with this misguided husband, he said with an air of extreme uneasiness, My dear friend, I can no longer live without unburdening my mind; and yet I would be forever silent, but that you value honor

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far above a treacherous repose. Your acute feelings and my own, on points which concern domestic injuries, forbid me to conceal what is passing in your family. Prepare to hear what will occasion you as much grief as astonishment. I am going to wound you in the tenderest part.

I know what you mean, interrupted Don Anastasio, in the first burst of agony; your cousin is unfaithful. I no longer acknowledge her for my cousin, replied Hordales with impassioned vehemence; I disown her, as unworthy to share my friend's embraces. This is keeping me too long upon the rack, exclaimed Don Anastasio: say on; what has Estephania done? She has betrayed you, replied Don Huberto. You have a rival to whom she listens in private, but I cannot give you his name; for the adulterer, under favor of impenetrable darkness, has escaped the ken of those who watched him. All I know is, that you are duped: of that fact I am well assured. My own share in the disgrace is a sufficient pledge of my veracity. Her infidelity must be palpable indeed, when I turn Estephania's accuser.

It is to no purpose, continued he, watching the successful impression of his discourse,—it is to no purpose to discuss the subject further. I perceive your indignation at the treacherous requital of your love, and your thoughts all aiming at a just revenge. Take your own course. Heed not in what relation to you your victim may stand; but convince the whole city that there is no earthly being whom you would not sacrifice to your honor.

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Thus did the traitor exasperate a too credulous husband against an innocent wife; depicting in such glowing colors the infamy in which he would be plunged, if he left the insult unpunished, as to heighten his anger into madness. Behold Don Anastasio with his mind completely overturned, as if goaded by the Furies. He returned homewards with the frantic design of murdering his ill-fated wife. She was just going to bed when he came in. He kept his passion under for a time, and waited till the attendants had withdrawn. Then, unrestrained by the fear of vengeance from above, by the vulgar scorn which must recoil upon an honorable family, by natural affection for his unborn child, since his wife was near her time, he approached his victim, and said to her in a furious tone of voice, Now is your hour to die, wretch as you are! One moment only is your own, which my relenting pity leaves you to make your peace with heaven. I would not that your soul should perish eternally, though your earthly honor is forever lost.

At these words he drew his dagger. Estephania, just speechless with terror, throwing herself at his feet, besought him, with uplifted hands and inarticulate agony, to tell her why he raised his arm against her life. If he suspected her fidelity, she called heaven to attest her innocence.

In vain, in vain, replied the infuriated murderer; your treason is but too well proved. My information is not to be contradicted: Don Huberto . . . Ah! my lord, interrupted she with eager haste, you

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must hold your trust aloof from Don Huberto. He is less your friend than you imagine. If he has said aught against my virtue, believe him not. Restrain that infamous tongue, replied Don Anastasio. By appealing against Hordales, you condemn yourself. You would ruin your relation in my esteem, because he is acquainted with your misconduct. You would invalidate his evidence against you; but the artifice is palpable, and only whets my appetite for vengeance. My dear husband, rejoined the innocent Estephania, while her tears flowed in torrents, beware of this blind rage. If you follow its instigation, you will perpetrate a deed for which you will hate yourself, when convinced of its injustice. In the name of heaven, compose your disordered spirits. At least give me time to clear up your suspicions; you will then deal candidly by a wife who has nothing to reproach herself with.

Any other than Don Anastasio would have been touched by her pleadings, and still more by her agonizing affliction; but the barbarian, far from being softened, ordered the lady once again to recommend herself briefly to mercy, and lifted his arm to strike the blow. Hold, inhuman as you are! cried she. If your love for me is as if it had never been, if my lavish fondness in return is all blotted from your memory, if my tears have no eloquence to disarm your hellish purpose, have some pity on your own blood. Launch not your frantic hand against an innocent, who has not yet breathed this vital air. You cannot be its executioner without

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the curse of heaven and earth. As for myself, I can forgive my murderer; but the butcher of his own child — think deeply of it! — must pay the dreadful forfeit of so detestable a deed.

Determined as Don Anastasio was to pay no attention to anything Estephania could say, he could not help being affected by the frightful images these last words presented to his soul. Wherefore, as if apprehensive lest nature should play the traitress to revenge, he hastened to make sure of his staggering resolves, and plunged his dagger into her bosom. She fell motionless on the ground. He thought her dead, and on that supposition left his house immediately, to be no more seen at Antequera.

In the mean time, the unhappy victim of groundless suspicion was so stunned with the blow she had received, as to remain for a short interval on the ground without any signs of life. Afterwards, coming to herself, she brought an old female servant to her assistance by her plaints and lamentations. That good old woman, beholding her mistress in so deplorable a state, waked the whole household, and even the neighborhood by her cries. The room was soon filled with spectators. Surgical assistance was sent for. The wound was probed, and pronounced not to be mortal. Their opinion turned out to be correct, for Estephania soon recovered, and was in due time delivered of a son, notwithstanding the cruel circumstances in which she had been placed. That son, Signor Gil Blas, you behold in me; I am the fruit of that dreadful pregnancy.

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Women, when chaste as ice, when pure as snow, seldom escape calumny: this plague, however, though virtue's dowry, did not alight upon my mother. The bloody scene passed, in common fame, for the transport of a jealous husband. My father, it is true, bore the character of a passionate man, prone to kindle into fury on the slightest occasion. Hordales could not but suppose that his kinswoman must suspect him of having sown wild fancies in the mind of Don Anastasio, so that he satisfied himself with this imperfect relish of revenge, and ceased to importune her. But, not to be tedious, I shall pass over the detail of my education. Suffice it to say, that my principal exercise was fencing, which I practised regularly in the most famous schools of Grenada and Seville. My mother waited with impatience till I was of age to measure swords with Don Huberto, that she might instruct me in the grounds of her complaint against him. In my eighteenth year, she submitted her cause to my arbitrament, not without floods of tears, and every symptom of the deepest anguish. What must not a son feel, if he has the spirit and the heart of a son, at the sight of a mother in such distressing circumstances? I went immediately and called out Hordales; our place of meeting was private, as it should be; we fought long and furiously; three of my thrusts took place, and I threw him to the ground, like a dead dog despised.

Don Huberto, feeling his wound to be mortal, fixed his last looks upon me, and declared that he

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met his death at my hands as a just punishment for his treason against my mother's honor. He owned that in revenge for the pangs of despised love he had resolved on her ruin. Thus did he breathe his last, imploring pardon from heaven, from Don Anastasio, from Estephania, and from myself. I deemed it imprudent to return home and acquaint my mother of the issue; fame was sure to perform that office for me. I passed the mountains, and repaired to Malaga, where I embarked on board a privateer. My outside not altogether indicating cowardice, the captain consented at once to enroll me among his crew.

We were not long before we went into action. Near the island of Alboutan, a corsair of Millila fell in with us, on his return towards the African coast with a Spanish vessel richly laden, taken off Carthagena. We attacked the African briskly, and made ourselves masters of both ships, with eighty Christians on board, going as slaves to Barbary. Afterwards, availing ourselves of a wind direct for the coast of Grenada, we shortly arrived at Punta de Helena.

While we were inquiring into the birthplace and condition of our rescued captives, a man about fifty, of prepossessing aspect, fell under my examination. He stated himself, with a sigh, to belong to Antequera. My heart palpitated, without my knowing why; and my emotion, too strong to pass unnoticed, excited a visible sympathy in him. I avowed myself his townsman, and asked his family name. Alas!

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answered he, your curiosity makes my sorrow flow afresh. Eighteen years ago did I leave my home, where my remembrance is coupled with scenes of blood and horror. You must yourself have heard but too much of my story. My name is Don Anastasio de Rada. Merciful heaven! exclaimed I; may I believe my senses? And can this be? Don Anastasio? Father! What is it you say, young man? exclaimed he, in his turn, with surprise and agitation equal to my own. Are you that ill-fated infant, still in its mother's womb, when I sacrificed her to my fury? Yes, said I; none other did the virtuous Estephania bring into the world, after the fatal night when you left her weltering in her own blood.

Don Anastasio stifled my words in his embraces. For a quarter of an hour we could only mingle our inarticulate sighs and exclamations. After exhausting our tender recollections, and indulging in the wild expression of our feelings, my father lifted his eyes to heaven, in gratitude for Estephania saved; but the next moment, as if doubtful of his bliss, he demanded by what evidence his wife's innocence had been cleared. Sir, answered I, none but yourself ever doubted it. Her conduct has been uniformly spotless. You must be undeceived. Know that Don Huberto was a traitor. In proof of this I unfolded all his perfidy, the vengeance I had taken, and his own confession before he expired.

My father was less delighted at his liberty restored than at these happy tidings. In the forgetfulness of

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ecstasy, he repeated all his former transports. His approbation of me was ardent and entire. Come, my son, said he, let us set out for Antequera. I burn with impatience to throw myself at the feet of a wife whom I have treated so unworthily. Since you have brought me acquainted with my own injustice, my heart has been torn by remorse.

I was too eager to bring together a couple so near and dear to me, not to expedite our journey as much as possible. I quitted the privateer, and with my share of prize money bought two mules at Adra, my father not choosing again to incur the hazard of a voyage. He found leisure on the road to relate his adventures, which I inclined to hear as seriously as did the Prince of Ithaca the various recitals of the king his father. At length, after several days, we halted at the foot of a mountain near Antequera. Wishing to reach home privately, we went not into the town till midnight.

You may guess my mother's astonishment at beholding a husband whom she had thought forever lost; and the almost miraculous circumstances of his restoration were a second source of wonder. He entreated forgiveness for his barbarity with marks of repentance so lively, that she could not but be moved. Instead of looking on him as a murderer, she only saw the man to whose will high heaven had subjected her; such religion is there in the name of husband to a virtuous wife! Estephania had been so alarmed about me, that my return filled her with rapture. But her joy on this account was not without allevia-

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tion. A sister of Hordales had instituted a criminal prosecution against her brother's antagonist. The search for me was hot, so that my mother, considering home as insecure, was painfully anxious about me. It was therefore necessary to set out that very night for court, whither I come to solicit my pardon, and hope to obtain it by your generous intercession with the prime minister.

The gallant son of Don Anastasio thus closed his narrative; after which I observed, with a self-sufficient physiognomy, It is well, Signor Don Roger; the offence seems to me to be venial. I will undertake to lay the case before his excellency, and may venture to promise you his protection. The thanks my client lavished would have passed in at one ear and out at the other, if they had not been backed by assurances of more substantial gratitude. But when once that string was touched, every nerve and fibre of my frame vibrated in unison. On the very same day did I relate the whole story to the duke, who allowed me to present the gentleman, and addressed him thus: Don Roger, I have been informed of the duel which has brought you to court; Santillane has laid all the particulars before me. Make yourself perfectly easy; you have done nothing but what the circumstances of the case might almost warrant; and it is especially on the ground of wounded honor that his Majesty is best pleased to extend his grace and favor. You must be committed for mere form's sake; but you may depend on it, your confinement shall be of short duration. In

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Santillane you have a zealous friend, who will watch over your interests and hasten your release.

Don Roger paid his respectful acknowledgments to the minister, on whose pledge he went and surrendered himself. His pardon was soon made out, owing to my activity. In less than ten days, I sent this modern Telemachus home, to say, "How do you do?" to his Ulysses and Penelope; had he stood upon the merits of his case without a protector, he might have whined out a year's imprisonment, and scarcely have got off at last. My commission was but a poor hundred pistoles. It was no very magnificent haul; but I was not as yet a Calderona, to turn up my nose at the small fry.

CHAPTER IX.

GIL BLAS MAKES A LARGE FORTUNE IN A SHORT TIME, AND BEHAVES LIKE OTHER WEALTHY UPSTARTS.

This affair gave me a relish for my trade; and ten pistoles to Scipio, by way of brokerage, whetted his eagerness to start more game of the same sort. I have already done justice to his talents that way; he might as modestly have appended "the great" to the tail of his name, as the most noted scoundrel of antiquity. The second customer he brought me was a printer, who manufactured books of chivalry, and had made his fortune by waging war against common sense. This printer had pirated a work belonging

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to a brother printer, and his edition had been seized. For three hundred ducats I rescued his copies out of jeopardy, and saved him from a heavy fine. Though this was a transaction beneath the prime minister's notice, his excellency condescended, at my request, to interpose his authority. After the printer, a merchant passed through my hands; the occasion was thus: A Portuguese vessel had been taken by a Barbary corsair, and retaken by a privateer from Cadiz. Two thirds of the cargo belonged to a merchant at Lisbon, who, having claimed his due to no purpose, came to the court of Spain in search of a protector, with sufficient credit to procure him restitution. I took up his cause, and he recovered his property, deducting the sum of four hundred pistoles, paid to me in consideration of my disinterested zeal for justice.

And now most surely the reader will call out to me at this place, Well said, good master Santillane! Make hay while the sun shines. You are on the high road to fortune; push forward, and outstrip your rivals. O! let me alone for that. I spy, or my eyes deceive me, my servant coming in with a new gull that he has just caught. Even so! It is my very Scipio. Let us hear what he has to say. Sir, quoth he, give me leave to introduce this eminent practitioner. He wants a license to sell his drugs, during the term of ten years, in all the towns of the Spanish monarchy, to the exclusion of all other quacks; in short, a monopoly of poisons. In gratitude for this patent to thin mankind, he will present

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the donor with a gratuity of two hundred pistoles. I looked superciliously, like a patron, at the mountebank, and told him that his business should be done. As lameness and leprosy would have it, in the course of a few days, I sent him on his progress through Spain, invested with full powers to make the world his oyster, and leave nothing but the shell to his unpatented competitors.

Besides that my avarice outran my accumulating wealth, I had obtained the four boons just specified so easily from his grace, as not to be mealy-mouthed about asking for a fifth. The town of Vera, on the coast of Grenada, wanted a governor; and a knight of Calatrava wanted the government, for which he was willing to pay me one thousand pistoles. The minister was ready to burst with laughing, to see me so eager after the scut. By all the powers, my friend Gil Blas, said he, you go to work tooth and nail! You have a most inveterate itch to do as you would be done by. But mark me! When mere trifles stand between us, I shall not stand upon trifles; but when governments or other places of real value are in question, you will have the modesty to be content with half the fee for yourself, and will account to me for the other half. It is inconceivable at what expense I stand, and how it presses on my finances to support the dignity of my station; for though disinterestedness looks vastly well in the eyes of the world, you are to understand, between ourselves, that I have made a solemn vow against dipping into my private fortune. On this hint, arrange your future plans.

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My master, by this discourse relieving me from the fear of being troublesome, or rather egging me on to run at the ring for every prize, made me still more worldly-minded than ever I had been before. I should not have objected to circulating handbills, with an invitation to all candidates for places to apply on certain terms at the secretary's office. My functions were here, Scipio's were there; and we met at the receipt of custom. My client got the government of Vera for his thousand pistoles; and as our price was fixed, a knight of St. James met his brother of Calatrava in the market on an equal footing. But mere governors were paltry fish to fry; I distributed orders of knighthood, and converted some good stupid burgesses into most insufferable gentry by one stroke of the pen, and a lacing across the shoulders with a broadsword. The clergy, too, were not forgotten in my charities. Lesser preferments were in my gift; everything up to prebendal stalls and collegiate dignities. With regard to bishoprics and archbishoprics, Don Rodrigo de Calderona had the charge of our holy religion. As church and state must always go together, supreme magistracies, commanderies, and viceroyalties were all in his gift; whence the reader will naturally infer, that the upper offices were little better tenanted than the lower ones; since the subjects on whom our election fell, establishing their pretensions on a certain palpable criterion, were not necessarily and unavoidably either the cleverest or the best-principled people in the world. We knew very well

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that the wits and lampooners of Madrid made themselves merry at our expense; but we borrowed our philosophy from misers, who hug themselves under the hootings of the people, when they count over the accumulation of their pelf.

Isocrates was in the right to insinuate, in his elegant Greek expression, that what is got over the devil's back is spent under his belly. When I saw myself master of thirty thousand ducats, and in a fair way to gain perhaps ten times as much, it seemed to be a necessity of office to make such a figure as became the right hand of a prime minister. I took a house to myself, and furnished it in the immediate taste. I bought an attorney's carriage at second hand; he had set it up at the suggestion of vanity, and laid it down at the suggestion of his banker. I hired a coachman and three footmen. Justice demands that old and faithful servants should be promoted; I therefore invested Scipio with the threefold honor of valet-de-chambre, private secretary, and steward. But the minister raised my pride to its highest pitch, for he was pleased to allow my people to wear his livery. My poor little wits were now completely turned. I was little more in my senses than the disciples of Porcius Latro, who, by dint of drinking cumin having made themselves as pale as their master, thought themselves every whit as learned; so I could scarcely refrain from fancying myself next of kin and presumptive heir to the Duke of Lerma himself. The populace might take me for his cousin, and people who knew better, for one of

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his bastards—a suspicion most flattering to my pride of blood.

Add to this, that after the example of his excellency, who kept a public table, I determined to give parties of my own. Pursuant thereunto, I commissioned Scipio to find me out a professed cook; and he stumbled upon one who might have dished up a dinner for Nomentanus, of dripping pan notoriety. My cellar was well stored with the choicest wines. My establishment being now complete, I gave my house-warming. Every evening some of the clerks in the public offices came to sup with me, and affected a sort of political high life below stairs. I did the honors hospitably, and always sent them home half seas over. Like master like man! Scipio, too, had his parties in the servants' hall, where he treated all his chums at my expense. But besides that I felt a real kindness for that lad, he contributed to grease the wheels of my establishment, and was entitled to have a finger in the dissipation. As a young man, some little license was allowable; and the ruinous consequences did not strike me at the time. Another reason, too, prevented me from taking notice of it; incessant vacancies, ecclesiastical and secular, paid me amply in meal and in malt. My surplus was increasing every day. Fortune's curricle seemed to have driven to my door, there to have broken down, and the driver to have taken shelter with me.

One thing more was wanting to my complete intoxication—that Fabricio might be witness to my pomp. He was, most probably, come back from

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Andalusia. For the fun of surprising him, I sent an anonymous note, importing that a Sicilian nobleman of his acquaintance would be glad of his company to supper, with the day, hour, and place of appointment, which was at my house. Nunez came, and was most inordinately astonished to recognize me in the Sicilian nobleman. Yes, my friend, said I, behold the master of this family. I have a retinue, a good table, and a strong box besides. Is it possible, exclaimed he with vivacity, that all this opulence should be yours? It was well done in me to have placed you with Count Galiano. I told you beforehand that he was a generous nobleman, and would not be long before he set you at your ease. Of course you followed my wise advice, in giving the rein a little more freely to your servants; you find the benefit of it. It is only by a little mutual accommodation, that the principal officers in great houses feather their nests so comfortably.

I suffered Fabricio to go on as long as he liked, complimenting himself for having introduced me to Count Galiano. When he had done, to chastise his ecstasies at having procured me so good a post, I stated at full length the returns of gratitude with which that nobleman had recompensed my services. But, perceiving how ready my poet was to string his lyre to satire at my recital, I said to him, The Sicilian's contemptible conduct I readily forgive. Between ourselves, it is more a subject of congratulation than of regret. If the count had dealt honorably by me, I should have followed him into Sicily,

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where I should still be in a subordinate capacity, waiting for dead men's shoes. In a word, I should not now have been hand in glove with the Duke of Lerma.

Nunez felt so strange a sensation at these last words, that he was tongue-tied for some seconds. Then gulping up his stammering accents like harlequin, Did I hear aright? said he. What! you hand in glove with the prime minister? I on one side, and Don Rodrigo de Calderona on the other, answered I; and according to all appearance, my fortunes will move higher. Truly, replied he, this is admirable. You are cut out for every occasion. What a universal genius! To borrow an expression from the tennis-court, you have a racket for every ball; nothing comes amiss to you. At all events, my lord, I am sincerely rejoiced at your lordship's prosperity. The deuce and all, Master Nunez! interrupted I; good now, dispense with your lords and lordships. Let us banish such formalities, and live on equal terms together. You are in the right, replied he; altered circumstances should not make strange faces. I will own my weakness; when you announced your elevation, you took away my breath; but the chill and the shudder are over, and I see only my old friend Gil Blas.

Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of four or five clerks. Gentlemen, said I, introducing Nunez, you are to sup with Signor Don Fabricio, who writes verses of impenetrable sublimity, and such prose as would not know itself in the glass.

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Unluckily I was talking to gentry who would have had more fellow-feeling with an orang outang than with a poet. They scarcely condescended to look at him. In vain did he pun, parody, rally, or rail to hit their fancies, for they had none. He was so nettled at their indifference, that he assumed the poetic license, and made his escape. Our clerks never missed him, but forgot at once that he had been there.

Just as I was going out the next morning, the poet of the Asturias came into my room. I beg pardon, said he, for having cut your clerks so abruptly last night; but, to deal freely, I was so much out of my clement, that I should soon have played old chaos with them. Proud puppies, with their starch and self-important air! I cannot conceive how a clever fellow like you can sit it out with such loutish guests. To-day I will bring you some of more life and spirit. I shall be very much obliged to you, answered I: your introduction is sufficient. Exactly so, replied he. You shall have the feast of reason and the flow of soul. I will go forthwith and invite them, for fear they should engage themselves elsewhere; for happy man be his dole who can get them to dinner or supper, they are such excellent company!

Away went he; and in the evening, at supper-time, returned with six authors in his train, whom he presented one after another with a set speech in their praise. According to his account, the wits of Greece and Italy were nothing in comparison of

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these, whose works ought to be printed in letters of gold. I received this deputation from the tuneful sisters very politely. My behavior was even in the extravagance of good breeding; for the republic of authors is a little monarchical in its demands upon our flattery. Though I had given Scipio no express direction respecting the number of covers at this entertainment, yet knowing what a hungry and voluptuous race were to be crammed, he had mustered the courses in more than their full complement.

At length, supper was announced, and we fell to merrily. My poets began talking of their poems and themselves. One fellow, with the most lyrical assurance, numbered up whole hosts of first-rate nobility and high-flying dames, who were quite enraptured with his muse. Another, though it was not for him to arraign the choice which a learned society had lately made of two new members, could not help saying that it was strange they should not have elected him. All the rest were much in the same story. Amid the clatter of knives and forks, my ears were more discordantly dinned with verses and harangues. They each took it by turns to give me a specimen of their composition. One languishes out a sonnet; another mouths a scene in a tragedy; and a third reads a melancholy criticism on the province of comedy. The next in turn spouts an ode of Anacreon, translated into most un-anacreontic Spanish verse. One of his brethren interrupts him, to point out the unclassical use of a particular phrase. The author of the version by no means acquiesces in

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the remark; hence arises an argument, in which all the literati take one side or the other. Opinions are nearly balanced; the disputants are nearly in a passion; as argument weakens, invective grows stronger; they get from bad to worse; over goes the table, and up jump they to fisticuffs. Fabricio, Scipio, my coachman, my footman, and myself have scarcely lungs or strength to bring them to their senses. The moment the battle was over, off scampered they as if my house had been a tavern, without the slightest apology for their ill behavior.

Nunez, on whose word I had anticipated a very pleasant party, looked rather blue at this conclusion. Well, my friend, said I, what do you think of your literary acquaintance now? As sure as Apollo is on Parnassus, you brought me a most blackguard set. I will stick to my clerks; so talk no more to me about authors. I shall take care, answered he, not to invite any of them to a gentleman's house again; for these are the most select and well-mannered of the tribe.

CHAPTER X.

THE MORALS OF GIL BLAS BECOME AT COURT MUCH AS IF THEY HAD NEVER BEEN AT ALL. A COMMISSION FROM THE COUNT DE LEMOS, WHICH, LIKE MOST COUNT COMMISSIONS, IMPLIES AN INTRIGUE.

When once my name was up for a man after the Duke of Lerma's own heart, I had very soon my

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court about me. Every morning was my antechamber crowded with company, and my levees were all the fashion. Two sorts of customers came to my shop; one set, to engage my interposition with the minister, on fair commercial principles; the other set, to excite my compassion by pathetic statements of their cases, and give me a lift to heaven on the packhorse of charity. The first were sure of being heard patiently and served diligently; with regard to the second order, I got rid of them at once by plausible evasions, or kept them dangling till they wore their patience threadbare, and went off in a huff. Before I was about the court, my nature was compassionate and charitable; but tenderness of heart is an unfashionable frailty there, and mine became harder than any flint. Here was an admirable school to correct the romantic sensibilities of friendship: nor was my philosophy any longer assailable in that quarter. My manner of dealing with Joseph Navarro, under the following circumstances, will prove more than volumes on that head.

This Navarro, the founder of my fortune, to whom my obligations were thick and threefold, paid me a visit one day. With the warmest expressions of regard, such as he was in the habit of lavishing, he begged me to ask the Duke of Lerma for a certain situation for one of his friends, a young man of excellent qualities and undoubted merit, but encumbered with an inability of getting on in the world. I am well assured, added Joseph, that with your good and obliging disposition, you will be enraptured to

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confer a favor on a worthy man with a very slender purse; I am sure you will feel obliged to me for giving you an opportunity of carrying your benevolent inclinations into effect. This was just as good as telling me that the business was to be done for nothing. Though such doctrine was not quite level to my capacity, I still affected a wish to do as he desired. It gives me infinite pleasure, answered I to Navarro, to have it in my power to evince my lively sense of all your former kindness to me. It is enough for you to take any man living by the hand; from that moment he becomes the object of my unwearied care. Your friend shall have the situation you want for him; nay, he has it already: it is no longer any concern of yours; leave it entirely to me.

On this assurance Joseph went away in high glee; nevertheless, the person he recommended had not the post in question. It was given to another man, and my strong box was the stronger by a thousand ducats. This sum was infinitely preferable to all the thanks in the world, so that I looked pitifully blank when next we met, saying, Ah, my dear Navarro! you should have thought of speaking to me sooner. That Calderona got the start of me; he has given away a certain thing that shall be nameless. I am vexed to the soul not to meet you with better tidings.

Joseph was fool enough to give me credit, and we parted better friends than ever; but I suspect that he soon found out the truth, for he never came near me again. This was just what I wanted. Besides

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that the memory of benefits received grated harshly, it would not have been at all the thing for a person in my then sphere to keep company with a certain description of people.

The Count de Lemos has been long in the background; let us bring him a little forwarder on the canvas. We met occasionally. I had carried him a thousand pistoles, as the reader will recollect; and I now carried him a thousand more, by order of his uncle, the duke, out of his excellency's funds lying in my hands. On this occasion the Count de Lemos honored me with a long conference. He informed me that at length he had completely gained his end, and was in unrivalled possession of the Prince of Spain's good graces, whose sole confidant he was. His next concern was to invest me with a right honorable commission, of which he had already given me a hint. Friend Santillane, said he, now is the time to strike while the iron is hot. Spare no pains to find out some young beauty, worthy to while away the prince's amorous hours. You have your wits about you; and a word to the wise is sufficient. Go; run about the town; pry into every hole and corner; and when you have pounced upon anything likely to suit, you will come and let me know. I promised the count to leave no stone unturned in the due discharge of my employment, which seemed to require no great force of genius, since the professors of the science are so numerous.

I had not hitherto been much practised in such delicate investigations, but it was more than proba-

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ble that Scipio had, and that his talent lay peculiarly that way. On my return home I called him in, and spoke thus to him in private: My good fellow, I have a very important secret to impart. Do you know that in the midst of fortune's favors there is something still wanting to crown all my wishes? I can easily guess what that is, interrupted he, without giving me time to finish what I was going to say; you want a little snug bit of contraband amusement, to keep you awake of evenings, and rub off the rust of business. And, in fact, it is a marvellous thing that you should have played the Joseph in the heyday of your blood, when so many graybeards around you are playing the Elder. I admire the quickness of your apprehension, replied I with a smile. Yes, my friend, a mistress is that something still wanting; and you shall choose for me. But I forewarn you that I am nice hungry, and must have a pretty person, with more than passable manners. The sort of thing that you require, returned Scipio, is not always to be met with in the market. Yet, as luck will have it, we are in a town where everything is to be got for money, and I am in hopes that your commission will not hang long on hand.

Accordingly within three days he pulled me by the sleeve: I have discovered a treasure! a young lady whose name is Catalina, of good family and matchless beauty, living with her aunt in a small house, where they make both ends meet by clubbing their little matters, and set the slanderous world at defiance. Their waiting-maid, a girl of my acquaint-

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ance, has given me to understand that their door, though barred against all impertinent intruders, would turn upon its hinges to a rich and generous suitor, if he would only consent, for fear of prying neighbors, not to pay his visits till after nightfall, and then in the most private manner possible. Hereupon I magnified you as the properest gentleman in the world, and entreated piety in pattens to offer your humble services to the ladies. She promised to do so, and to bring me back my answer to-morrow morning at an appointed place. That is all very well, answered I; but I am afraid your goddess of bed-making has been running her rig upon you. No, no, replied he; old birds are not to be caught with chaff: I have already made inquiry in the neighborhood, and by the general report of her, Signora Catalina is a second Danae, on whom you will have the happiness of coming down,

> Like Jove descending from his tower,
> To court her in a silver shower.

Out of conceit as I was with the intrinsic value of ladies' favors, this was not to be scoffed at; and as our Mercury in petticoats came the next day to tell Scipio that it only depended on me to be introduced that very evening, I dropped in between eleven and twelve o'clock. The knowing one received me without bringing a candle, and led me by the hand into a very neat apartment, where the two ladies were sitting on a satin sofa, dressed in the most elegant taste. As soon as they saw me enter, they got up and welcomed me in a style of such superior breed-

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ing, as would not have disgraced the highest rank. The aunt, whose name was Signora Mencia, though with the remains of beauty, had no attractions for me. But the niece had a million, for she was a goddess in mortal form. And yet, to examine her critically, she could not have been admitted for a perfect beauty; but then there was a charm above all rules of symmetry, with a tingling and luxurious warmth about her, that seized on men's hearts through their eyes, and prevented their brains from being too busy.

Neither were my senses proof against so dazzling a display. I forgot my errand as proxy, and spoke on my own private individual account, with the enthusiasm of a raw recruit in the tender passion. The dear little creature, whose wit sounded in my ears with three times its actual acuteness, under favor of her natural endowments, made a complete conquest of me by her prattle. I began to launch out into foolish raptures, when the aunt, to bring me to my bearings, led the conversation to the point in hand: Signor de Santillane, I shall deal very explicitly with you. On the high encomiums I have heard of your character, you have been admitted here without the affectation of making much ado about trifles: but do not imagine that your views are the nearer their termination for that. Hitherto I have brought my niece up in retirement, and you are, as it were, the very first male creature on whom she has ever set eyes. If you deem her worthy of being your wife, I shall feel myself highly honored

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by the alliance: it is for you to consider whether those terms suit you; but you cannot have her on cheaper.

This was proceeding to business with a vengeance! It put little Cupid to flight at once: or else he was just going to try one of his sharpest arrows upon me. But a truce with the Pantheon! A marriage so bluntly proposed dispelled the fairy vision: I sunk back at once into the count's plodding agent, and changing my tone, answered Signora Mencia thus: Madam, your frankness delights me, and I will meet it half way. Whatever rank I may hold at court, lower than the highest is too low for the peerless Catalina. A far more brilliant offer waits her acceptance; the Prince of Spain shall be thrown into her toils. Surely it was enough to have refused my niece, replied the aunt, sarcastically; such compliments are sufficiently unpleasing to our sex; it could not be necessary to make us your unfeeling sport. I really am not in so merry a mood, madam, exclaimed I: it is a plain matter of fact; I am commissioned to look out for a young lady, of merit sufficient to engage the prince's heart, and receive his private visits; the object of my search is in your house, and here his royal highness shall fix his quarters.

Signora Mencia could scarcely believe her ears; neither were they grievously offended. Nevertheless, thinking it decent to be startled at the immorality of the proceeding, she replied to the following effect: Though I should give implicit credit to what you tell me, you must understand that I am

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not of a character to take pleasure in the infamous distinction of seeing my niece a prince's concubine. Every feeling of virtue and of honor revolts at the idea. . . . What a simpleton you are with your virtue and honor! interrupted I. You have not a notion above the level of a tradesman's wife. Was there ever any thing so stupid as to consider affairs of this kind with a view to their moral tendency? It is stripping them of all their beauty and excellence. In the magic lantern of plenty, pleasure, and preferment, they appear with all their brightest gloss. Figure to yourself the heir to the monarchy at the happy Catalina's feet; fancy him all rapture and lavish bounty; nor doubt but that from her shall spring a hero, who shall immortalize his mother's name, by enrolling his own in the unperishable records of eternal fame.

Though the aunt desired no better sport than to take me at my word, she affected not to know what she had best do; and Catalina, who longed to have a grapple with the Prince of Spain, affected not to care about the matter, which made it necessary for me to press the siege closer, till at length Signora Mencia, finding me chopfallen and ready to withdraw my forces, sounded a parley, and agreed to a convention, containing the two following articles: *Imprimis*, if the Prince of Spain, on the fame of Catalina's charms, should take fire, and determine to pay her a nightly visit, it should be my care to let the ladies know when they might expect him. *Secondo*, that the prince should be introduced to the

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said ladies as a private gentleman, accompanied only by himself and his principal purveyor.

After this capitulation, the aunt and niece were upon the best terms possible with me; they behaved as if we had known one another from our cradles; on the strength of which I ventured on some little familiarities, which were not taken at all unkindly; and when we parted, they embraced me of their own accord, and slabbered me over with inexpressible fondness. It is marvellous to think with what facility a tender connection is formed between persons in the same line of trade, but of opposite sexes. It might have been suspected by an eye-witness of my departure, in all the plenitude of warm and repeated salutation, that my visit had been more successful than it was.

The Count de Lemos was highly delighted when I announced the long-expected discovery. I spoke of Catalina in terms which made him long to see her. The following night I took him to her house, and he owned that I had beat the bush to some purpose. He told the ladies he had no doubt but the Prince of Spain would be fully satisfied with my choice of a mistress, who, on her part, would have reason to be well pleased with such a lover; that the young prince was generous, good-tempered, and amiable; in short, he promised in a few days to bring him in the mode they enjoined, without retinue or publicity. That nobleman then took leave of them, and I withdrew with him. We got into his carriage, in which we had both driven thither, and which was waiting

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at the end of the street. He set me down at my own door, with a special charge to inform his uncle next day of the new game started, not forgetting to impress strongly how conducive a good bag of pistoles would be to the successful accomplishment of the adventure.

I did not fail on the following morning to go and give the Duke of Lerma an exact account of all that had passed. There was but one thing kept back. I did not mention Scipio's name, but took credit to myself for the discovery of Catalina. One makes a merit of any dirty work in the service of the great.

Abundant were the compliments paid me on this occasion. My good friend Gil Blas, said the minister with a bantering air, I am delighted that, with all your talents, you have that besides of discovering kind-hearted beauties; whenever I have occasion for such an article, you will have the goodness to supply me. My lord, answered I with mock gravity like his own, you are very obliging to give me the preference; but it may not be unseasonable to observe that there would be an indelicacy in my administering to your excellency's pleasures of this description. Signor don Rodrigo has been so long in possession of that post about your person, that it would be manifest injustice to rob him of it. The duke smiled at my answer, and then changing the subject, asked whether his nephew did not want money for this new speculation. Excuse my negligence! said I; he will thank you to send him a thousand pistoles. Well and good! replied the minister; you will

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furnish him accordingly, with my strict injunction not to be niggardly, but to encourage the prince in whatever pleasurable expenses his heart may prompt him to indulge.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PRINCE OF SPAIN'S SECRET VISIT, AND PRESENTS TO CATALINA.

I WENT to the Count de Lemos on the spur of the occasion, with five hundred double pistoles in my hand. You could not have come at a better time, said that nobleman. I have been talking with the prince; he has taken the bait, and burns with impatience to see Catalina. This very night he intends to slip privately out of the palace, and pay her a visit; it is a measure determined on, and our arrangements are already made. Give notice to the ladies, through the medium of the cash you have just brought; it is proper to let them know they have no ordinary lover to receive, and a matter of course that generosity in princes should be the herald of their partialities. As you will be of our party, take care to be in the way at bed-time; and as your carriage will be wanted, let it wait near the palace about midnight.

I immediately repaired to the ladies. Catalina was not visible, having just gone to lie down. I

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could only speak with Signora Mencia. Madam, said I, forgive my appearance here in the daytime, but there was no avoiding it; you must know that the Prince of Spain will be with you to-night; and here, added I, putting my pecuniary credentials into her hand, here is an offering which he lays on the Cytherean shrine, to propitiate the divinities of the temple. You may perceive, I have not entangled you in a sleeveless concern. You have been excessively kind indeed, answered she; but tell me, Signor de Santillane, does the prince love music? To distraction, replied I. There is nothing he so much delights in as a fine voice, with a delicate lute accompaniment. So much the better, exclaimed she in a transport of joy; you give me great pleasure by saying so, for my niece has the pipe of a nightingale, and plays exquisitely on the lute: then her dancing is in the finest style! Heavens and earth! exclaimed I in my turn, here are accomplishments by wholesale, aunt; more than enough to make any girl's fortune! Any one of those talents would have been a sufficient dowry.

Having thus smoothed his reception, I waited for the prince's bed-time. When it was near at hand, I gave my coachman his orders, and went to the Count de Lemos, who told me that the prince, the sooner to get rid of the people about him, meant to feign a slight indisposition, and even to go to bed, the better to cajole his attendants; but that he would get up an hour afterwards, and go through a private door to a back staircase leading into the court-yard.

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Conformably with their previous arrangements, he fixed my station. There had I to beat the hoof so long, that I began to suspect our forward sprig of royalty had gone another way, or else had changed his mind about Catalina; just as if princes ever began to be fickle till the goad of novelty and curiosity began to be blunted. In short, I thought they had forgotten me, when two men came up. Finding them to be my party, I led the way to my carriage, into which they both got, and I upon the coach-box to direct the driver, whom I stopped fifty yards from the house, whither we walked. The door opened at our approach, and shut again as soon as we got in.

At first we were in absolute darkness, as on my former visit, though a small lamp was fixed to the wall on the present occasion. But the light which it shed was so faint as only to render itself visible without assisting us. All this served only to heighten the romance in the fancy of its hero, fixed as he was in steadfast gaze at the sight of the ladies as they received him in a saloon whose brilliant illumination was more dazzling when contrasted with the gloom of the avenue. The aunt and niece were in a tempting undress, where the science of coquetry was displayed in all its luxury and absolute sway. Our prince could have been happy with Signora Mencia, had the dear charmer Catalina been away; but as there was a choice, the younger, according to the rules of precedency in the court of Cupid, had the preference.

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Well! prince, said the Count de Lemos, could you have desired a better specimen of beauty? They are both enchanting, answered the prince, and my heart may as well surrender at once; for the aunt would arrest it in its flight, if it attempted to sound a retreat from the niece's all-subduing charms.

After such compliments as do not fall by wholesale to the share of aunts, he addressed his choicest terms of flattery to Catalina, who answered him in kind. As convenient personages of my stamp are allowed to mingle in the conversation of lovers, for the purpose of making fire hotter, I introduced the subject of singing and playing on the lute. This was the signal of fresh rapture! and the nymph, the muse, the anything but mortal, was supplicated to outtune the jingle of the spheres. She complied like a good-humored goddess; played some tender airs, and sung so deliciously, that the prince flopped down on his knees in a tumult of love and pleasure. But scenes like these are vapid in description: suffice it to say that hours glided away like moments in this sweet delirium, till the approach of day warned the sober plotters of the lunacy to provide for their patient's safety and their own. When the parties were all snugly housed, we gave ourselves as much credit for the negotiation as if we had patched up a marriage with a princess.

The next morning the Duke of Lerma desired to know all the particulars. Just as I had finished relating them, the Count de Lemos came in, and said, The Prince of Spain is so engrossed by Catalina, he has

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taken so decided a fancy to her, that he actually proposes to be constant. He wanted to have sent her jewels to the amount of two thousand pistoles to-day, but his finances were aground. My dear Lemos, said he, addressing himself to me, you must absolutely get me that sum. I know it is very inconvenient; you have pawned your credit for me already; but my heart owns itself your debtor, and if ever I have the means of returning your kindness by more than empty words, your fortunes shall not suffer by your complaisance. In answer, I assured him that I had friends and credit, and promised to bring him what he wanted.

There is no difficulty about that, said the duke to his nephew. Santillane will bring you the money; or, to save trouble, he may purchase the jewels, for he is an admirable judge, especially of rubies. Are you not, Gil Blas? This stroke of satire was of course designed to entertain the count at my expense; and it was successful, for his curiosity could not but be excited to know the meaning of the mystery. No mystery at all, replied his uncle, with a broad laugh. Only Santillane took it into his head one day to exchange a diamond for a ruby, and the barter operated equally to the advantage of his pocket and his penetration.

Had the minister stopped there I should have come off cheaply; but he took the trouble of dressing out in aggravated colors the trick that Camilla and Don Raphael played me, with a most provoking enlargement of the circumstances most to the disadvantage

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of my sagacity. His excellency, having enjoyed his joke, ordered me to attend the Count de Lemos to a jeweller's, where we selected trinkets for the Prince of Spain's inspection, and they were intrusted to my care, to be delivered to Catalina.

There can be little doubt of my kind reception on the following night, when I displayed a fine pair of drop ear-rings, as the presents of my embassy. The two ladies, out of their wits at these costly tokens of the prince's love, suffered their tongues to run into a gossiping strain, while they were thanking me for introducing them into such worshipful society. In the excess of their joy, they forgot themselves a little. There escaped now and then certain peculiar idioms of speech, which made me suspect that the party in question was no such dainty morsel for royalty to feed upon. To ascertain precisely what degree of obligation I had conferred on the heir-apparent, I took my leave with the intention of coming to a right understanding with Scipio.

CHAPTER XII.

CATALINA'S REAL CONDITION A WORRY AND ALARM TO GIL BLAS. HIS PRECAUTIONS FOR HIS OWN EASE AND QUIET.

On coming home, I heard a devil of a noise, and inquired what was the meaning of it. They told me that Scipio was giving a supper to half-a-dozen of his friends. They were singing as loud as their

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lungs could roar, and threatening the stability of the house with their protracted peals of laughter. This meal was not in all respects the banquet of the seven wise men.

The founder of the feast, informed of my arrival, said to his company, Sit still, gentlemen; it is only the master of the house come home; but that need not disturb you. Go on with your merry-making; I will but just whisper a word in his ear, and be back again in a moment. He came to me accordingly. What an infernal din! said I. What sort of company do you keep below? Have you, too, got in among the poets? Thank you for nothing! answered he. Your wine is too good to be given to such gentry; I turn it to better account. There is a young man of large property in my party, who wishes to lay out your credit and his own money in the purchase of a place. This little festivity is all for him. For every glass he fills, I put on ten pistoles, in addition to the regular fee. He shall drink till he is under the table. If that is the case, replied I, go to your presidentship, and do not spare the cellar.

Then was no proper time to talk about Catalina; but the next morning I opened the business thus: Friend Scipio, the terms we are upon entitle me to fair dealing. I have treated you more like an equal than a servant; consequently you would be much to blame to cheat me on the footing of a master. Let us, therefore, have no secrets towards each other. I am going to tell you what will surprise you; and you,

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on your part, shall give me your sincere opinion about the two women with whom you have brought me acquainted. Between ourselves, I suspect them to be no better than they should be; with so much the more of the knave in their composition, because they affect the simpleton. If my conjecture be right, the Prince of Spain has no great reason to be delighted with my activity; for I will own to you frankly that it was for him I spoke to you about a mistress. I brought him to see Catalina, and he is over head and ears in love with her. Sir, answered Scipio, you have dealt so handsomely by me, that I shall act upon the square with you. I had yesterday a private interview with the abigail, and she gave me a most entertaining history of the family. You shall have it briefly, though it did not come briefly to me.

Catalina was daughter to a sort of gentleman in Arragon. An orphan at fifteen, with no fortune but a pretty face, she lent a complying ear to an officer who carried her off to Toledo, where he died in six months, having been more like a father than a husband to her. She collected his effects together, consisting of their joint wardrobe and three hundred pistoles in ready money, and then went to housekeeping with Signora Mencia, who was still in fashion, though a little on the wane. These sisters, every way but in blood, began at length to attract the attention of the police. The ladies took umbrage at this, and decamped in dudgeon for Madrid, where they have been living for these two years, without making any acquaintance in the neighbor-

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hood. But now comes the best of the joke: they have taken two small houses adjoining each other, with a passage of communication through the cellars. Signora Mencia lives with a servant girl in one of these houses, and the officer's widow inhabits the other, with an old duenna, whom she passes off for her grandmother; so that her versatile child of nature is sometimes a niece brought up by her aunt, and sometimes an orphan under her grandam's fostering wing. When she enacts the niece, her name is Catalina; and when she personates the granddaughter, she calls herself Sirena.

At the grating sound of Sirena I turned pale, and interrupted Scipio, saying, What do you tell me? Alas! it must be so. This cursed imp of Arragon is Calderona's charming Siren. To be sure she is, answered he, the very same! I thought you would be delighted at the news. Quite the reverse, replied I. It portends more sorrow than laughter; do not you anticipate the consequences? None of any ill omen, rejoined Scipio. What is there to be afraid of? It is not certain that Don Rodrigo will rub his forehead; and in case any good-natured friend should show it him in the glass, you had better let the minister into the secret beforehand. Tell him all the circumstances straightforward as they happened; he will see that there has been no trick on your part; and if, after that, Calderona should attempt to do you an ill office with his excellency, it will be as clear as daylight that he is only actuated by a spirit of revenge.

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Scipio removed all my apprehensions by this advice, which I followed in acquainting the Duke of Lerma at once with this unlucky discovery. My aspect, while telling my tale, was sorrowful, and my tone faltering, in evidence of my contrition for having unadvisedly brought the prince and Don Rodrigo into such close quarters; but the minister was more disposed to roast his favorite than to pity him. Indeed, he ordered me to let the matter take its own course, considering it as a feather in Calderona's cap to dispute the empire of love with so illustrious a rival, and not to be worse used than his lawful prince. The Count de Lemos, too, was informed how things stood, and promised me his protection, if the first secretary should come at the knowledge of the intrigue, and attempt to undermine me with the duke.

Trusting to have secured the frail bark of my fortunes by this notable contrivance from the rocks and quicksands that threatened it, my mind was once more at rest. I continued attending the prince on his visits to Catalina, siren-like in nature as in nickname, who was fertile in quaint devices to keep Don Rodrigo away from next door, whenever the course of business required her to devote her nights to his royal competitor.

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CHAPTER XIII.

GIL BLAS GOES ON PERSONATING THE GREAT MAN. HE HEARS NEWS OF HIS FAMILY: A TOUCH OF NATURE ON THE OCCASION. A GRAND QUARREL WITH FABRICIO.

I MENTIONED, some time ago, that in the morning there was usually a crowd of people in my antechamber, coming to negotiate little private concerns in the way of politics; but I would never suffer them to open their business by word of mouth; but adopting court precedent, or rather giving myself the airs of a jack in office, my language to every suitor was, Send in a memorial on the subject. My tongue ran so glibly to that tune, that one day I gave my landlord the official answer, when he came to put me in mind of a twelvemonth's rent in arrear. As for my butcher and baker, they spared me the trouble of asking for their memorials, by never giving me time to run up a bill. Scipio, who mimicked me so exactly, that only those behind the scenes could distinguish the double from the principal performer, held his head just as high with the poor devils who curried favor with him, as a step of the ladder to my ministerial patronage.

There was another foolish trick of mine, of which I do not by any means pretend to make a merit; neither more nor less than the extreme assurance of talking about the first nobility, just as if I had been one of their kidney. Suppose, for example, the Duke of Alva, the Duke of Ossuna, or the Duke of

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Medina Sidonia were mentioned in conversation; I called them, without ceremony, my friend Alva, that good-natured fellow Ossuna, or that comical dog Medina Sidonia. In a word, my pride and vanity had swelled to such a height, that my father and mother were no longer among the number of my honored relatives. Alas! poor understrappers, I never thought of asking whether you had sunk or were swimming in the Asturias. A thought about you never came into my head. The court has all the soporific virtues of Lethe in the case of poor relations.

My family was completely obliterated from the tablets of my memory, when one morning a young man knocked at my door, and begged to speak with me for a moment in private. He was shown into my closet, where, without asking him to take a chair, as he seemed to be quite a common fellow, I desired to know abruptly what he wanted. How! Signor Gil Blas, said he, do you not remember me? It was in vain that I perused the lines of his face over and over again; I was obliged to tell him fairly that he had the advantage of me. Why, I am one of your old schoolfellows! replied he, bred and born in Oviedo; Bertrand Muscada, the grocer's son, next door neighbor to your uncle the canon. I recollect you as well as if it was but yesterday. We have played a thousand times together at blind man's buff and prison bars.

My youthful recollections, answered I, are very transient and confused. Blind man's buff and prison

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bars are but childish amusement! The burden of state affairs leaves me little time to ruminate on the trifles of my younger days. I am come to Madrid, said he, to settle accounts with my father's correspondent. I heard talk of you. Folks say that you have a good berth at court, and are already almost as well off as a Jew broker. I thought I would just call in and say, how d'ye do? On my return into the country, your family will jump out of their skins for joy, when they hear how famously you are getting on.

It was impossible in decency to avoid asking how my father, my mother, and my uncle stood in the world; but that duty was performed in so gingerly a manner as to leave the grocer little room to compliment dame Nature on her liberal provision of instinct. He seemed quite shocked at my indifference for such near kindred, and told me bluntly, with his coarse chopman's familiarity, Methinks you might have shown more heartiness and natural feeling for your kinsfolk! Why, you ask after them just as if they were vermin! Your father and mother are still at service; take that in your dish! And the good canon, Gil Perez, eaten up with gout, rheumatism, and old age, has one foot in the grave. People should feel as people ought; and seeing that you are in a berth to be a blessing to your poor parents, take a friend's advice, and allow them two hundred pistoles a-year. That will be doing a handsome thing, and making them comfortable; and then you may spend the rest upon yourself with a good conscience. Instead of

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being softened by this family picture, I only resented the officiousness of unasked advice. A more delicate and covert remonstrance might perhaps have made its impression, but so bold a rebuke only hardened my heart. My sulky silence was not lost upon him, so that while he moralized himself out of charity into downright abuse, my choler began to overflow. Nay, then! this is too much, answered I, in a devil of a passion. Get about your business, Master Muscada, and mind your own shop. You are a pretty fellow to preach to me! As if I were to be taught my duty by you! Without further parley I handed the grocer out of my closet by the shoulder, and sent him off to weigh figs and nutmegs at Oviedo.

The home-strokes he had laid on were not lost to my sober recollection. My neglect of filial piety struck home to my heart, and melted me into tears. When I recollected how much my childhood was indebted to my parents, what pains they had taken in my education, these affecting thoughts gave language for the moment to the still small voice of nature and gratitude; but the language was never translated into solid sense and service. An habitual callousness succeeded this transient sensation, and peremptorily cancelled every obligation of humanity. There are many fathers besides mine who will acknowledge this portrait of their sons.

Avarice and ambition, dividing me between them, annihilated every trace of my former temper. I lost

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all my gayety, became absent and moping; in short, a most unsociable animal. Fabricio, seeing me so furiously bent on accumulation, and so perfectly indifferent to him, very rarely came to see me. He could not help saying one day, In truth, Gil Blas, you are quite an altered man. Before you were about the court, you were always pleasant and easy. Now you are all agitation and turmoil. You form project after project to make a fortune, and the more you realize, the wider your views of aggrandizement extend. But this is not the worst! You have no longer that expansion of heart, those open manners, which form the charm of friendship. On the contrary, you wrap yourself round, and shut the avenues of your heart even to me. In your very civilities I detect the violence you impose upon yourself. In short, Gil Blas is no longer the same Gil Blas whom I once knew.

You really have a most happy talent for bantering, answered I, with repulsive jocularity. But this metamorphose into the shag of a savage is not perceptible to myself. Your own eyes, replied he, are insensible to the change, because they are fascinated. But the fact remains the same. Now, my friend, tell me fairly and honestly, shall we live together as heretofore? When I used to knock at your door in the morning, you came and opened it yourself, between asleep and awake, and I walked in without ceremony. Now, what a difference! You have an establishment of servants. They keep me cooling

my heels in your antechamber; my name must be sent in before I can speak to you. When this is got over, what is my reception? A cold inclination of the head, and the insolent strut of office. Any one would suppose that my visits were growing troublesome! Can you suppose this to be treatment for a man who was once on equal terms with you? No, Santillane, it can never be, nor will I bear it longer. Farewell. Let us part without ill blood. We shall both be better asunder; you will get rid of a troublesome censor, and I of a purse-proud upstart who does not know himself.

I felt myself more exasperated than reformed by his reproaches, and suffered him to take his departure without the slightest effort to overcome his resolution. In the present temper of my mind, the friendship of a poet did not seem a catch of sufficient importance to break one's heart about its loss. I found ample amends in the intimacy of some subaltern attendants about the king's person, with whom a similarity of humor had lately connected me closely. These new acquaintances of mine were for the most part men from no one knows where, pushed up to their appointments more by luck than merit. They had all got into warm berths, and, wretches as they were, measuring their own consequence by the excess of royal bounty, forgot their origin as scandalously as I forgot mine. We gave ourselves infinite credit for what told so much and bitterly to our disgrace. O Fortune! what a jade you are, to distribute

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your favors at hap-hazard as you do! Epictetus was perfectly in the right when he likened you to a jilt of fashion, prowling about in masquerade, and tipping the wink to every blackguard who parades the street.

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BOOK THE NINTH.

CHAPTER I.

SCIPIO'S SCHEME OF MARRIAGE FOR GIL BLAS. THE MATCH, A RICH GOLDSMITH'S DAUGHTER. CIRCUMSTANCES CONNECTED WITH THIS SPECULATION.

One evening, on the departure of my supper company, finding myself alone with Scipio, I asked him what he had been doing that day. Striking a master-stroke, answered he. I intend that you should marry. A goldsmith of my acquaintance has an only daughter, and I mean to make up a match between you.

A goldsmith's daughter! exclaimed I, with a disdainful air; are you out of your senses? Can you think of tying me up to a trinket-maker? People of a certain character in society, and on a certain footing at court, ought to have much higher views of things. Pardon me, sir, rejoined Scipio; do not take the subject up in that light. Recollect that nobility accrues by the male side, and do not ride a higher horse than a thousand jockeys of quality whom I could name. Do you know that the heiress in question will bring a hundred thousand ducats in her pocket? Is not that a pretty little sprig of

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jewelry? To the resounding echo of so large a sum my ears were instantly symphonious. The day is your own, said I to the secretary; the fortune determines the case in the lady's favor. When do you mean to put me in possession? Fair and softly, sir, answered he; the more haste, the worse speed. It will be necessary for me first to communicate the affair to the father, and instil the advantage of it into his capacity. Good! rejoined I, with a burst of laughter; is it thereabouts you are? The match is far advanced in its progress towards consummation. Much nearer than you suppose, replied he. But one hour's conversation with the goldsmith, and I pledge myself for his consent. But, before we go any farther, let us come to an agreement, if you please. Supposing that I should transfer a hundred thousand ducats to you, what would my commission be? Twenty thousand! was my answer. Heaven be praised therefore, said he. I guessed your gratitude at ten thousand; so that it doubles mine in a similar case. Come on then! I will set this negotiation on foot to-morrow morning; and you may count upon its success, or I am little better than one of the foolish ones.

In fact, he said to me two days afterwards, I have spoken to Signor Gabriel Salero, my friend the goldsmith. On the loud report of your high desert and credit, he has lent a favorable ear to my offer of you for a son-in-law. You are to have his daughter with a hundred thousand ducats, provided you can make it appear clearly that you are in possession of the

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minister's good graces. Since that is the case, said I confidently to Scipio, I shall soon be married. But, not entirely to forget the girl, have you seen her? is she pretty? Not quite so pretty as her fortune, answered he. Between ourselves, this heiress's looks are as hard as her cash. Luckily, you are perfectly indifferent about that. Stone blind, by the light of the sun, my good fellow! replied I. As for us whimsical fellows about court, we marry merely for the sake of marrying. When we want beauty, we look for it in our friends' wives; and if, by fates and destinies, the sweets are wasted on our own, their flavor is so mawkish to our palate, that there is some merit in their not carrying the commodity to a foreign market.

This is not all, resumed Scipio: Signor Gabriel hopes for the pleasure of your company to supper this evening. By agreement, there is to be no mention of marriage. He has invited several of his mercantile friends to this entertainment, where you will take your chance with the rest, and to-morrow he means to sup with you on the same terms. By this you will perceive his drift of looking before he leaps. You will do well to be a little on your guard before him. O, for the matter of that, interrupted I, with an air of confidence, let him scrutinize me as closely as he pleases, the result cannot fail to be in my favor.

All this happened as it was foretold. I was introduced at the goldsmith's, who received me with the familiarity of an old acquaintance. A vulgar

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dog, but warm; and as troublesome with his civility as a prude with her virtue. He presented me to Signora Eugenia his wife, and the youthful Gabriela his daughter. I opened wide my budget of compliments, without infringing the treaty, and prattled soft nothings to them, in all the vacuity of courtly dialogue.

Gabriela, with submission to my secretary's better taste, was not altogether so repulsive; whether by dint of being outrageously bedizened, or because I looked at her in the raree-show box of her fortune. A charming house this of Signor Gabriel! There is less silver, I verily believe, in the Peruvian mines, than under his roof. That metal presented itself to the view in all directions, under a thousand different forms. Every room, and especially that where we were entertained, was a fairy palace. What a bird's-eye view for a son-in-law! The old codger, to do the thing genteelly, had collected five or six merchants about him, all plodding, spirit-wearing personages. Their tongues could only talk of what their hearts were set upon: it was high change all supper-time; but unfortunately wit was at a discount.

Next night it was my turn to treat the goldsmith. Not being able to dazzle him with my sideboard, I had recourse to another artifice. I invited to supper such of my friends as made the finest figure at court; hangers-on of state, noted for the unwieldiness of their ambition. These fellows could not talk on common topics: the brilliant and lucrative posts at which they aimed were all canvassed in detail; this

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too made its way. Poor counting-house Gabriel, in amazement at the loftiness of their ideas, shrunk into insignificance, in spite of all his hoards, on a comparison with these wonderful men. As for me, in all the plausiblity of moderation, I professed to wish for nothing more than a comfortable fortune; a snug box and a competence: whereupon these gluttons of the leaves and fishes cried out with one voice that I was wrong, absolutely criminal; for the prime minister would do anything upon earth for me, and it was an act of duty to anoint my fingers with bird-lime. My honored papa lost not a word of all this, and seemed, at going away, to take his leave with some complacency.

Scipio went, of course, the next morning, to ask him how he liked me. Extremely well indeed, answered the knight of the ledger; the lad has won my very heart. But, good master Scipio, I conjure you by our long acquaintance to deal with me as a true friend. We have all our weak side, as you well know. Tell me where Signor de Santillane is fallible. Is he fond of play? Does he wench? On what lay are his snug little vices? Do not fight shy, I beseech you. It is very unkind, Signor Gabriel, to put such a question, retorted the go-between. Your interest is more to me than my master's. If he had any slippery propensities, likely to make your daughter unhappy, would I ever have proposed him as a son-in-law? The dence a bit! I am too much at your service. But, between ourselves, he has but one fault—that of being faultless.

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He is too wise for a young man. So much the better, replied the goldsmith; he is the more like me. You may go, my friend, and tell him he shall have my daughter, and should have her, though he knew no more of the minister than I do.

As soon as my secretary had reported this conversation, I flew to thank Salero for his partiality. He had already told his mind to his wife and daughter, who gave me to understand, by their reception, that they yielded without disgust. I carried my father-in-law to the Duke of Lerma, whom I had informed the evening before, and presented him with due ceremony. His excellency gave him a most gracious reception, and congratulated him on having chosen a man for his son-in-law for whom he himself had so great a regard, and meant to do such great things. Then did he expatiate on my good qualities, and, in fact, said so much to my honor, that honest Gabriel thought he had met with the best match in Spain. His joy oozed out at his eyes. On parting, he pressed me in his arms, and said, My son, I am so impatient to see you Gabriela's husband, that the affair shall be finally settled within a week at latest.

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CHAPTER II.

IN THE PROGRESS OF POLITICAL VACANCIES, GIL BLAS RECOLLECTS THAT THERE IS SUCH A MAN IN THE WORLD AS DON ALPHONSO DE LEYVA, AND RENDERS HIM A SERVICE FROM MOTIVES OF VANITY.

LET us leave my marriage to take care of itself for a season. The order of events requires me to recount a service rendered to my old master Don Alphonso. I had entirely forgotten that gentleman's existence; but a circumstance recalled it to my recollection.

The government of Valencia became vacant at this time, and put me in mind of Don Alphonso de Leyva. I considered within myself that the employment would suit him to a nicety, and determined to apply for it on his behalf, not so much out of friendship as ostentation. If I could but procure it for him, it would do me infinite honor. I told the Duke of Lerma that I had been steward to Don Cæsar de Leyva and his son, and that, having every reason in the world to feel myself obliged to them, I should take it as a favor if he would give the government of Valencia to one or other of them. The minister answered, Most willingly, Gil Blas. I love to see you grateful and generous. Besides, the family stands very high in my esteem. The Leyvas are loyal subjects; so that the place cannot be better bestowed. You may take it as a wedding present, and do what you like with it.

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Delighted at the success of my application, I went to Calderona in a prodigious hurry, to get the patent made out for Don Alphonso. There was a great crowd waiting in respectful silence till Don Rodrigo should come and give audience. I made my way through, and the closet door opened as if by sympathy. There were no one knows how many military and civil officers, with other people of consequence, among whom Calderona was dividing his attentions. His different reception of different people was curious. A slight inclination of the head was enough for some; others he honored with a profusion of courtly grimace, and bowed them out of the closet. The proportions of civility were weighed to a scruple. On the other hand, there were some suitors, who, shocked at his cold indifference, cursed in their secret soul the necessity for their cringing before such a monkey of an idol. Others, on the contrary, were laughing in their sleeve at his gross and self-sufficient air. But the scene was thrown away upon me; nor was I likely to profit by such a lesson. It was exactly the counterpart of my own behavior; and I never thought of ascertaining whether my deportment was popular or offensive, so long as there was no violation of outward respect.

Don Rodrigo, accidentally casting a look towards me, left a gentleman, to whom he was speaking, without ceremony, and came to pay his respects with the most unaccountable tokens of high consideration. Ah, my dear colleague! exclaimed he, what occasion

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procures me the pleasure of seeing you here? Is there anything we can do for you? I told him my business; whereupon he assured me, in the most obliging terms, that the affair should be expedited within four-and-twenty hours. Not satisfied with these overwhelming condescensions, he conducted me to the door of his antechamber, whither he never attended any but the nobility of first rank. His farewell was as flattering as his reception.

What is the meaning of all this palaver? said I, while retreating; has any raven croaked my entrance, and prophesied promotion to Calderona by my overthrow? Does he really languish for my friendship? or does he feel the ground giving way under his feet, and wish to save himself by clinging to the branches of my favor and protection? It seemed a moot point which of these conjectures might be the right. The following day, on my return, his behavior was of the same stamp; caresses and civilities poured in upon me in torrents. It is true that other people, who attempted to speak to him, were rumped in exact proportion with the blandishments of his face towards me. He snarled at some, petrified others, and made the whole circle run the gantlet of his displeasure. But they were all amply avenged by an occurrence, the relation of which may give a gentle hint to all the clerks and secretaries on the list of my readers.

A man very plainly dressed, and certainly not looking at all like what he was, came up to Calderona, and spoke to him about a memorial stated to

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have been presented by himself to the Duke of Lerma. Don Rodrigo, without looking from his clothes up to his face, said in a sharp, ungracious tone, Who may you happen to be, honest man? They called me Francillo in my childhood, answered the stranger, unabashed; my next style and title was that of Don Francillo de Zuniga; and my present name is the Count de Pedrosa. Calderona was all in a twitter at this discovery, and attempted to stammer out an excuse, when he found that he had to do with a man of the first quality. Sir, said he to the count, I have to beg you ten thousand pardons; but not knowing whom I had the honor to . . . . I want none of your apologies, interrupted Francillo with proud indignation; they are as nauseous as your rudeness was unbecoming. Recollect henceforth that a minister's secretary ought to receive all descriptions of people with good manners. You may be vain enough to affect the representative of your master, but the public know you for his menial servant.

The haughty Don Rodrigo blushed blue at this rebuke. Yet it did not mend his manners one whit. On me it made a salutary impression. I determined to take care and ascertain the rank of my petitioners before I gave a loose to the insolence of office, and to inflict torture only upon mutes. As Don Alphonso's patent was made out, I sent it by a purpose messenger, with a letter from the Duke of Lerma, announcing the royal favor. But I took no notice of my own share in the appointment, nor even

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accompanied it with a line, in the fond hope of announcing it by word of mouth, and surprising him agreeably, when he came to court on occasion of taking the customary oaths.

CHAPTER III.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE MARRIAGE OF GIL BLAS. A SPOKE IN THE WHEEL OF HYMEN.

And now once more for my lovely Gabriela! We were to be married in a week. Preparations were making on both sides for the ceremony. Salero ordered a rich wardrobe for the bride, and I hired a waiting-woman for her, a footman, and a gentleman usher of decent aspect and advanced years. The whole establishment was provided by Scipio, who longed more longingly than myself for the hour when we were to be fingering the fortune.

On the evening before the happy day, I was supping with my father-in-law, the rest of the company being made up of uncles, aunts, and cousins of either sex and every degree. The part of a supple-visaged son-in-law sat upon me to perfection. Nothing could exceed my profound respect for the goldsmith and his wife, or the transports of my passion at Gabriela's feet, while I smoothed my way into the graces of the family, by listening with impregnable patience to their witless repartees and irrational ratiocinations. Thus did I gain the great end of all my for-

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bearance—the pleasure of pleasing my new relations. Every individual of the clan felt himself a foot taller for the honor of my alliance.

The repast ended, the company moved into a large room, where we were entertained with a concert of vocal and instrumental music, not the worst that was ever heard, though the performers were not selected from the choicest bands at Madrid. Some lively airs put us in mind of dancing. Heaven knows what sort of performers we must have been, when they took me for the coryphæus of the opera, though I never had but two or three lessons from a petty dancing-master, who taught the pages on the establishment of the Marchioness de Chaves. After we had tired our tendons, it was time to think of going home. There was no end of my bows and God-bless-you's. Farewell, my dear son-in-law, said Salero, as he squeezed my hand; I shall be at your house in the morning with the portion in ready money. You will be welcome, come when you list, my dear father-in-law, answered I. Afterwards, wishing the family good night, I jumped into my carriage, and ordered it to drive home.

Scarcely had I got two hundred yards from Signor Gabriel's house, when fifteen or twenty men, some on foot and some on horseback, all with swords and fire-arms, surrounded and stopped the coach, crying out, *In the name of our sovereign lord the king.* They dragged me out by main force, and thrust me into a hack-chaise, when the leader of the party got in with me, and ordered the driver to go for Segovia.

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There could be no doubt but the honest gentleman by my side was an alguazil. I wanted to know something about the cause of my arrest; but he answered in the language of those gentry, which is very bad language, that he had other things to do than to satisfy my impertinent curiosity. I suggested that he might have mistaken his man. No, no, retorted he, the fool is wiser than that. You are Signor de Santillane; and in that case you are to go along with me. Not being able to deny that fact, it became an act of prudence to hold my tongue. For the remainder of the night we traversed Mancanarez in sulky silence, changed horses at Colmenar, and arrived the next evening at Segovia, where the lodging provided for me was in the tower.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TREATMENT OF GIL BLAS IN THE TOWER OF SEGOVIA. THE CAUSE OF HIS IMPRISONMENT.

Their first favor was to clap me up in a cell, where they left me on the straw like a criminal, whose only earthly portion was to con over his dying speech in solitude. I passed the night, not in bewailing my fate,—for it had not yet presented itself in all its aggravation,—but in endeavoring to divine its cause. Doubtless it must have been Calderona's handiwork. And yet, though his branching honors might have pressed thick upon his senses, I could

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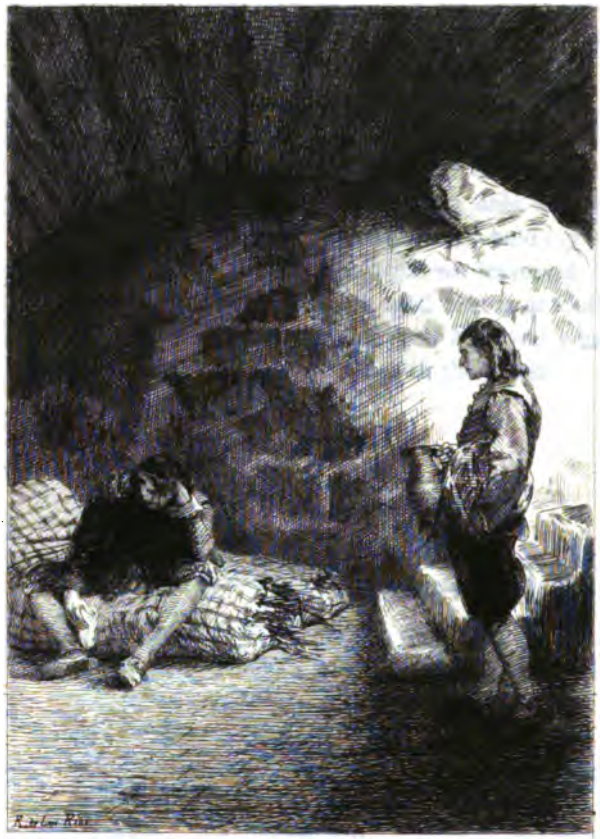

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not conceive how the Duke of Lerma could have been induced to treat me so inhumanly. Sometimes I apprehended my arrest to have been without his excellency's knowledge; at other times I thought him the contriver of it, for some political reasons, such as weigh with ministers when they sacrifice their accomplices at the shrine of state policy.

My mind was vibrating to and fro with these various conjectures, when the dawn, peeping in at my little grated window, presented to my sight all the horror of the place where I was confined. Then did I vent my sorrows without ceasing, and my eyes became two springs of tears, flowing inexhaustibly at the remembrance of my prosperous state. Pending this paroxysm of grief, a turnkey brought me my day's allowance of bread and water. He looked at me, and on the contemplation of my tear-besprinkled visage, jailer as he was, there came over him a sentiment of pity: Do not despair, said he. This life is full of crosses, but mind them not. You are young; after these days, you will live to see better. In the mean time, eat at the king's mess with what appetite you may.

My comforter withdrew with this quaint invitation, answered by my groans and tears. The rest of the day was spent in cursing my wayward destiny, without thinking of my empty stomach. As for the royal morsel, it seemed more like the message of wrath than the boon of benevolence; the tantalizing protraction of pain, rather than the solace of affliction.

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Night came, and with it the rattle of a key in my keyhole. My dungeon door opened, and in came a man with a wax-light in his hand. He advanced towards me, saying, Signor Gil Blas, behold in me one of your old friends. I am Don Andrew de Tordesillas, in the Archbishop of Grenada's service while you enjoyed that prelate's favor. You may recollect engaging his interest in my behalf, and thereby procuring me a post in Mexico; but instead of embarking for the Indies, I stopped in the town of Alicant. There I married the governor's daughter, and by a series of adventures of which you shall hereafter have the particulars, I am now warden of this tower. It is expressly forbidden me to let you speak to any living soul, to give you any better bed than straw, or any other sustenance than bread and water. But besides that your misfortunes interest my humanity, you have done me service, and gratitude countervails the harshness of my orders. They think to make me the instrument of their cruelty, but it is my better purpose to soften the rigor of your captivity. Get up and follow me.

Though my humane keeper was entitled to some acknowledgment, my spirits were so affected as to interdict my speech. All I could do was to attend him. We crossed a court, and mounted a narrow staircase to a little room at the top of the tower. It was no small surprise, on entering, to find a table, with lights on it, neatly set out with covers for two. They will serve up immediately, said Tordesillas. We are going to sup together. This snug retreat is

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appointed for your lodging; it will agree better with you than your cell. From your window you will look down on the flowery banks of the Erêma, and the delicious vale of Coca, bounded by the mountains which divide the two Castiles. At first you will care little for prospects; but when time shall have softened your keener sensations into a composed melancholy, it will be a pleasure to feast your eyes on such engaging scenes. Then, as for linen and other necessaries befitting a man accustomed to the comforts of life, they shall be always at your service. Your bed and board shall be such as you could wish, with a plentiful supply of books. In a word, you shall have everything but your liberty.

My spirits were a little tranquillized by these obliging offers. I took courage, and returned my best thanks, assuring him that his generous conduct restored me to life, and that I hoped at some time or other to find an opportunity of testifying my gratitude. To be sure! and why should you not? answered he. Did you fancy yourself a prisoner for life? Nothing less likely! and I would lay a wager that you will be released in a very few months. What say you, Signor Don Andrew? exclaimed I. Then surely you are acquainted with the occasion of my misfortune. You guess right, replied he. The alguazil who brought you hither told me the whole story in confidence. The king, hearing that the Count de Lemos and you were in the habit of escorting the Prince of Spain by night to a house of suspicious character, as a punishment for your loose

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morals, has banished the count, and sent you hither, to be treated in the style of which you have had a specimen. And how, said I, did that circumstance come to the king's knowledge? That is what I am most curious to ascertain. And that, answered he, is precisely what the alguazil did not tell, apparently because he did not know.

At this epoch of our conversation, the servants brought in supper. When everything was set in order, Tordesillas sent away the attendants, not wishing our conversation to be overheard. He shut the door, and we took our seats opposite to each other. Let us say grace, and fall to, said he. Your appetite ought to be good after two days of fasting. Under this impression he loaded my plate as if he had been cramming the craw of a starveling. In fact, nothing was more likely than that I should play the devil among the ragouts; but what is likely does not always happen. Though my intestines were yearning for support, their staple stuck in my throat, for my heart loathed all pleasurable indulgence in the present state of my affairs. In vain did my warden, to drive away the blue devils, pledge me continually, and expatiate on the excellence of his wine; imperishable nectar would have been pricked, according to the fastidious report of my palate. This being the case, he went another way to work, and told me the story of his marriage, with as much humor as such a subject would admit. Here he was still less successful. So wandering was my attention, that before the end, I had forgotten the begin-

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ning and the middle. At length he was convinced that there was no diverting my gloomy thoughts for that evening. After finishing his solitary supper, he rose from table, saying, Signor de Santillane, I shall leave you to your repose, or rather to the free indulgence of your own reveries. But, take my word for it, your misfortune will not be of long continuance. The king is naturally good. When his anger shall have passed away, and your deplorable estate shall occur to his milder thoughts, your punishment will appear sufficient in his eyes. With these words, my kind-hearted jailer went down stairs, and sent the servants to take away. Not even the brass candlesticks were left behind; and I went to bed by the palpable darkness of a glimmering lamp suspended against the wall.

CHAPTER V.

HIS REFLECTIONS BEFORE HE WENT TO SLEEP THAT NIGHT, AND THE NOISE THAT WAKED HIM.

Two hours at least were my thoughts employed on what Tordesillas had told me. Here, then, am I, for having lent myself to the pleasures of the heir-apparent! It was certainly not having my wits about me, to pander for so young a prince. Therein consists my crime: had he been arrived at a more knowing age, the king perhaps might only have laughed at what has now made him so angry. But who can have given such counsel to the monarch,

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without dreading the prince's resentment or the Duke of Lerma's? That minister will doubtless take ample vengeance for his nephew the Count de Lemos. How can the king have made the discovery? That is above my comprehension.

This last was the eternal burden of my song. But the idea most afflictive to my mind, what drove me to despair, and laid fiend-like hold upon my fancy, was the unquestioned plunder of my effects. My strong box, exclaimed I, my dear wealth, what is become of you? Into what hands have you fallen? Alas! you are lost in less time than you were gained! The ruinous confusion of my household was the perpetual death's head of my imagination. Yet this wilderness of melancholy ideas sheltered me from absolute distraction; sleep, which had shunned my wretched straw, now paid his readier visit to my soft and gentlemanly couch. Watching and wine, too, imparted a strong narcotic to his poppies. My slumbers were profound; and to all appearance, the day might have peeped in upon my repose, if I had not been awakened all at once by such sounds as rarely perforate a prison wall. I heard the thrum of a guitar, accompanying a man's voice. My whole attention was absorbed; but the invisible musician paused, and left the fleeting impression of a dream. An instant afterwards, my ear was soothed with the sound of the same instrument, and the same voice.

> Wisely the ant against poor winter hoards
> The stock which summer's wealth affords;
> In grasshoppers, that must at autumn die,
> How vain were such an industry!

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Of love or fortune the deceitful light
Might half excuse our cheated sight,
If it of life the whole small time would stay,
And be our sunshine all the day.*

These verses, which sounded as if they had been sung expressly for the dirge of my departed happiness, were only an aggravation of my feelings. The truth of the sentiment, said I, is but too well exemplified in me. The meteor of court favor has but plunged me in substantial darkness; the summer sunshine of ambition is quenched in these autumnal glooms. Now did I sink again into cold and comfortless meditation; my miseries began to flow afresh, as if they fed and grew upon their own vital stream. Yet my wailings ended with the night; and the first rays which played upon my chamber wall amused my mind into composure. I got up to open my window, and let the vivid air of morning into my room. Then I glanced over the country, so attractively depicted in the description of my keeper. It did not seem to justify his panegyric. The Erêma, a second Tagus in my magnifying fancy, was little better than a brook. Its flowery banks were fringed with nettles, and arrayed in all the majesty of thistles; the delicious vale in this fairy prospect was a barren wilderness, untamed by human labor. It therefore was very evident that my keener sensations were not

* To have substituted, with a slight variation, these two stanzas from Cowley for a translation of the commonplace couplet in the original, will probably not be thought to require any apology. They necessarily involve a change in the consequent reflections of our hero. TRANSLATOR.

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yet softened into such a composed melancholy as could give any but a jaundiced coloring to the landscape.

I began dressing, and had already half finished my toilet, when Tordesillas ushered in an old chambermaid, laden with shirts and towels. Signor Gil Blas, said he, here is your linen. Do not be saving of it; there shall always be as many changes as you can possibly want. Well, now! and how have you passed the night? Has the drowsy god administered his anodyne? I could have slept till this time, answered I, if I had not been awakened by a voice singing to a guitar. The cavalier who has disturbed your repose, resumed he, is a state prisoner; and his chamber is contiguous to yours. He is a knight of the military order of Calatrava, and is a very accomplished person. His name is Don Gaston de Cogollos. You may meet as often as you like, and take your meals together. It will afford reciprocal consolation to compare your fortunes. There can be no doubt of your being agreeable to one another. I assured Don Andrew how sensible I was of his indulgence in allowing me to blend my sorrows with those of my fellow-sufferer; and, as I betrayed some impatience to be acquainted with him, our accommodating warden met my wishes on the very same day. He fixed me to dine with Don Gaston, whose prepossessing physiognomy and symmetry of feature struck me sensibly. Judge what it must have been to make so strong an impression on eyes accustomed to encounter the dazzling exterior of the court. Figure to yourself a man fashioned in the mould of

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pleasure; one of those heroes in romance, who has only to show his face, and banish the sweet sleep from the eyelids of princesses. Add to this, that nature, who is generally bountiful with one hand and niggardly with the other, had crowned the perfections of Cogollos with wit and valor. He was a man, whose like, take him for all in all, we might not soon look upon again.

If this fine fellow was mightily to my taste, it was my good luck not to be altogether offensive to him. He no longer sang at night for fear of annoying me, though I begged him by no means to restrain his inclinations on my account. A bond of union is soon formed between brethren in misfortune. A close friendship succeeded to mere acquaintance, and strengthened from day to day. The liberty of uninterrupted intercourse contributed greatly to our mutual support; our burden became lighter by division.

One day after dinner I went into his room, just as he was tuning his guitar. To hear him more at my ease, I sat down on the only stool; while he, reclining on his bed, played a pathetic air, and sang to it a ditty, expressing the despair of a lover and the cruelty of his mistress. When he had finished, I said to him with a smile, Sir knight, such strains as these could never be applicable to your own successes with the fair. You were not made to cope with female repulse. You think too well of me, answered he. The verses you have just heard were composed to fit my own case — to soften a heart of adamant. You must hear my story, and in my story, my distresses.

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CHAPTER VI.

HISTORY OF DON GASTON DE COGOLLOS AND DONNA HELENA DE GALISTEO.

It will be very soon four years since I left Madrid to go and see my aunt Donna Eleonora de Laxarilla at Coria: she is one of the richest dowagers in Old Castile, with myself for her only heir. Scarcely had I got within her doors, when love invaded my repose. The windows of my room faced the lattice of a lady living opposite; but the street was narrow, and her blinds pervious to the eye. It was an opportunity too delicious to be lost, and I found my neighbor so lovely that my heart was captivated. The subject of my sentry-watch could not be mistaken. She marked it well; but she was not a girl to glory in the detection, still less to encourage my fooleries.

It was natural to inquire the name of this mighty conqueror. I learned it to be Donna Helena, only daughter of Don George de Galisteo, lord of a large domain near Coria. She had innumerable offers of marriage; but her father repulsed them all, because he meant to bestow her hand on his nephew Don Austin de Olighera, who had uninterrupted access to his cousin while the settlements were preparing. This was no bar to my hopes: on the contrary, it whetted my eagerness, and the insolent pleasure of supplanting a favored rival was, perhaps, at bottom equally my motive with a more noble passion. My

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visual artillery was obstinately planted against my unyielding fair. Her attendant Felicia was not without any incense of a glance, to soften her rigid constancy in my favor; while nods and becks stood for the current coin of language. But all these efforts of gallantry were in vain — the maid was impregnable, like her mistress — never was there such a pair of cold and cruel ones.

The commerce of the eyes being so unthrifty, I had recourse to different agents. My scouts were on the watch to hunt out what acquaintance Felicia might have in town. They discovered an old lady, by name Theodora, to be her most intimate friend, and that they often met. Delighted at the intelligence, I went point blank to Theodora, and engaged her by presents in my interest. She took my cause up heartily, promised to contrive an interview for me with her friend, and kept her engagement the very next day.

I am no longer the wretch of yesterday, said I to Felicia, since my sufferings have melted you to pity. How deep is my debt to your friend for her kind interference in my behalf! Sir, answered she, Theodora can do what she pleases with me. She has brought me over to your side of the question; and if I can do you a kindness, you shall soon be at the summit of your wishes; but, with all my partiality in your favor, I know not how far my efforts may be successful. It would be cruel to mislead you; the prize will not be gained without a severe conflict. The object of your passion is betrothed to

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another gentleman, and her character most inauspicious to your designs. Such is her pride, and so closely locked are her secrets within her own breast, that if, by constancy and assiduities, you could extort from her a few sighs, fancy not that her haughty spirit would indulge your ears with their music. Ah! my dear Felicia, exclaimed I, in an agony, why will you thus magnify the obstacles in my way? To set them in array will kill me. Lead me on with false hopes, if you will, but do not drive me to despair. With these words I took one of her hands, pressed it between mine, and slid a diamond on her finger, value three hundred pistoles, with such a moving compliment as made her weep again.

Such speeches and corresponding actions deserved some scanty comfort. She smoothed a little the rugged path of love. Sir, said she, what I have just been telling you need not quite quench your hope. Your rival, it is true, is in possession of the ground. He comes back and fore as he pleases. He toys with her as often as he likes; but all that is in your favor. The habit of constant intercourse sheds a languor over their meetings. They part without pain, and come together without emotion. One would take them for man and wife. In a word, my mistress has no marks of violent love for Don Austin. Besides, in point of person, there is such a difference between you and him as cannot fail to catch the eye of a nice observer like Donna Helena. Therefore do not be cast down. Continue your particular attentions. You shall have a second in me. I shall

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let no opportunity escape of pointing out to my mistress the merit of all your exertions to please her. In vain shall she intrench herself behind reserve. In spite of guard and garrison, I will ransack the muster-roll of her sentiments.

Now were my open attacks and secret ambuscades more fiercely pointed against the daughter of Don George. Among the rest, I entertained her with a serenade. After the concert, Felicia, to sound her mistress, begged to know how she had been entertained. The singer had a good voice, said Donna Helena. But how did you like the words? replied the abigail. I scarcely noted them, returned the lady; the music engrossed my whole attention. The poetry excited as little curiosity as its author. If that is the case, exclaimed the chambermaid, poor Don Gaston de Cogollos is reckoning without his host; and a miserable spendthrift of his glances, to be always ogling at our lattice-work. Perhaps it may not be he, said the mistress, with petrifying indifference, but some other spark, announcing his passion by this concert. Excuse me, answered Felicia, it is Don Gaston himself, who accosted me this morning in the street, and implored me to assure you how he adored, in defiance of your rigorous repulses; but that he should esteem himself the most blest of mortals if you would allow him to soothe his desponding thoughts by all the most delicate and impassioned attentions. Judge now if I can be mistaken, after so open an avowal.

Don George's daughter changed countenance at

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once, and said to her servant, with a severe frown, You might well have dispensed with the relation of this impertinent discourse. Bring me no more such idle tales; and tell this young madman, when next he accosts you, to play off his shallow artifices on some more accommodating fool; but, at all events, let him choose a more gentlemanly recreation than that of lounging all day at his window, and prying into the privacy of my apartment.

This message was faithfully delivered at my next interview with Felicia, who assured me that her mistress's modes of speech were not to be taken in their literal construction, but that my affairs were in the best possible train. For my part, being little read in the science of coquetry, and finding no favorable sense on the face of the author's original words, I was half out of humor with the wire-drawn comments of the critic. She laughed at my misgiving, and asked her friend for pen, ink, and paper, saying, Sir knight of the doleful countenance, write immediately to Donna Helena as dolefully as you look. Make echo ring with your sufferings; outsigh the river's murmur; and, above all, let rocks and woods resound with the prohibition of appearing at your window. Then pawn your existence on obeying her, though without the possibility ever to redeem the pledge. Turn all that nonsense into pretty sentences, as you gay deceivers so well know how to do, and leave the rest to me. The event, I flatter myself, will redound more than you are aware to the honor of my penetration.

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He must have been a strange lover who would not have profited by so opportune an occasion of writing to his mistress. My letter was couched in the most pathetic terms. Felicia smiled at its contents, and said that if the women knew the art of infatuating men, the men, in return, had borrowed their influence over women from the arch wheedler himself. My privy counsellor took the note, and went back to Don George's, with a special injunction that my windows should be fast shut for some days.

Madam, said she, going up to Donna Helena, I met Don Gaston. He must needs endeavor to come round me with his flattering speeches. In tremulous accents, like a culprit pleading against his sentence, he begged to know whether I had spoken to you on his behalf. Then, in prompt and faithful compliance with your orders, I snapped up the words out of his mouth. To be sure, my tongue did run at a fine rate against him. I called him all manner of names, and left him in the street like a stock, staring at my termagant loquacity. I am delighted, answered Donna Helena, that you have disengaged me from that troublesome person. But there was no occasion to have snubbed him so unmercifully. A creature of your degree should always keep a good tongue in its mouth. Madam, replied the domestic, one cannot get rid of a determined lover by mincing one's words, though it comes to much the same thing when one flies into a passion. Don Gaston, for instance, was not to be bullied out of his senses. After hav-

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ing given it him on both sides of his ears, as I told you, I went on that errand of yours to the house of your relation. The lady, as ill luck would have it, kept me longer than she ought. I say longer than she ought, because my plague and torment met me on my return. Who the deuce would have thought of seeing him? It put me all in a twitter; but then my tongue, which at other times is apt to be in a twitter, stuck motionless in my mouth. While my tongue stuck motionless in my mouth, what did he do? He slid a paper into my hand without giving me time to consider whether I should take it or no, and made off in a moment.

After this introduction, she drew my letter from under her stays, and gave it with half a banter to her mistress, who affected to read it in humorous scorn, but digested the contents most greedily, and then put on the starch, offended prude. In good earnest, Felicia, said she, with all the gravity she could assume, you were extremely off your guard, quite bewildered and fascinated, to have taken the charge of such an epistle. What construction would Don Gaston put upon it? What must I think of it myself? You give me reason, by this strange behavior, to mistrust your fidelity, while he must suspect me of encouraging his odious suit. Alas! he may, perhaps, lay that flattering unction to his soul, that my love is legible in these characters, and not his trespass. Only consider how you lay my towering pride. O, quite the reverse, madam, answered the petticoated pleader; it is impossible for him to think

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that; and if he did, he would soon be convinced with a flea in his ear. I shall tell him, when next we meet, that I have delivered his letter, that you glanced at the superscription with petrifying indifference, and then, without reading a word, tore it into ten thousand pieces. You may swear that I did not read it with a safe conscience, replied Donna Helena. I should be puzzled to retrace a single sentiment. Don George's daughter, not contented with these words, suited the action to them, tore my letter, and imposed silence on my advocate.

As I had promised no longer to play the lover at my window, the farce of obedience was kept up for several days. Ogling being interdicted, my courtship was doomed to enter in at my Helena's obdurate ears. One night I attended under her balcony with musicians; the first bars of the serenade were already playing, when a swaggering blade, sword in hand, rushed in upon our harmony, laying about him to the right and left, to the utter discomfiture of the troop. Such mad warfare fired my tilting propensities to equal fury. The affray became serious. Donna Helena and her maid were disturbed by the clash of swords. They looked out at their lattice, and saw two men engaged. Their cries roused Don George and his servants. The whole neighborhood was assembled to part the combatants. But they came too late: on the field of battle, bathed in its own blood and almost lifeless, lay my unfortunate body. They carried me to my aunt's, and sent for the best surgical assistance in the place.

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All the world was merciful, and wished me well, especially Donna Helena, whose heart was now unmasked. Her forced severity yielded to her natural feelings. Would you believe it? The cold, relentless, insensible, was kindled into the warmest of love's votaries. She wore out the remainder of the night in weeping with her faithful confidante, and giving her cousin, Don Austin de Olighera, to perdition; for him they taxed with the plotted massacre, and the bill was a true one. He could hide his heart as well as his cousin; he therefore watched my motions, without seeming to suspect them; and fancying them not to be without a corresponding impulse, he resolved not to be sacrificed with impunity. The accident was an awkward one to me, but it ended in overpowering rapture. Dangerous as my wound was, the surgeon soon brought me about. I was still confined to my chamber, when my aunt, Donna Eleonora, went over to Don George, and made proposals for Donna Helena. He consented the more readily to the marriage, as he never expected to see Don Austin again. The good old man was afraid of his daughter's not liking me, because cousin Olighera had kept her company; but she was so tractable to the parental behest, as to furnish grounds for believing that in Spain, as in other countries, the species, not the individual, is the object with the sex.

Felicia, at our first private meeting, communicated the emotions of her mistress on my misfortune. Now, like another Paris, I thought Troy well lost for my Helen, and blessed the happy consequences

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of my wound. Don George allowed me to speak with his daughter in presence of her attendant. What a heavenly interview! I begged and prayed the lady so earnestly to tell me whether her sufferance of my vows was forced upon her by her father, that she at length confessed her obedience to be in unison with her inclinations. After so delicious a declaration, my whole soul was given up to love and pleasurable gratifications. Our nuptials were to be graced by a magnificent procession of all the principal people in Coria and the neighborhood.

I gave a splendid party at my aunt's country-house, in the suburbs on the side of Manroi. Don George, his daughter, the family, and friends on both sides were present. There was a concert of vocal and instrumental music, with a company of strolling players, to represent a comedy. In the middle of the festivities, some one whispered me that a man wanted to speak with me in the hall. I got up from table to go and see who it was. The stranger looked like a gentleman's servant. He put a letter into my hand, containing these words: —

"If you have any sense of honor, as a knight of your order ought to have, you will not fail to attend to-morrow morning in the plain of Manroi. There you will find an antagonist ready to give you your revenge for his former attack upon your person, or, what he rather hopes and meditates, to spoil your connubial transports with Donna Helena.

"Don Austin de Olighera."

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If love is a Spanish passion, revenge is the Spanish lunacy. Such a note as this was not to be read with composure. At the mere subscription of Don Austin, there kindled in my veins a fire which almost made me forget the claims of hospitality. I was tempted to steal away from my company, and seek my antagonist on the instant. For fear of disturbing the merriment, however, I bridled in my rage, and said to the messenger, My friend, you may tell your employer that I shall meet him on the appointed spot at sunrise, and resume the contest with obstinacy equal to his own.

After sending this answer, I resumed my seat at table with so composed a mien that no creature had the least suspicion of what had occurred. During the rest of the day I gave myself up to the pleasures of the festival, which ended not till midnight. The guests then returned to town; but I staid behind, under pretext of taking the air on the following morning. Instead of going to bed, I watched for the dawn with maddening impatience. With the first ray I got on horseback, and rode alone towards Manroi. On the plain was a horseman, riding up to me at full speed. I pushed forward, and we met half way. It was my rival. Knight, said he, superciliously, it is against my will that I meet you a second time on the same occasion; but you have brought your fate on yourself. After the adventure of the serenade, you ought to have waived your pretensions to Don George's daughter, or at least to have been assured that the support of them must cost

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you dearer than a single encounter. You are too much elated, answered I, with an advantage which is less owing, perhaps, to your superior skill, than to the darkness of the night. Remember that victory is of the same blind family with fortune. It shall be my lot to teach you, replied he with insulting scorn, that I have unsealed the eyes of both.

At this proud defiance, we both dismounted, tied our horses to a tree, and engaged with equal fury. I must candidly acknowledge the prowess of my antagonist, who was a consummate master of fencing. My life was exposed to the greatest possible danger. Nevertheless, as the strong is often vanquished by the weak, my rival, in spite of all his science, received a thrust through the heart, and fell a lifeless corpse.

I immediately returned, and told a confidential servant what had happened, requesting him to take horse and acquaint my aunt, before the officers of justice could get intelligence of the event. He was also to obtain from her a supply of money and jewels, and then join me at the first inn as you enter Plazencia.

All this was performed within three hours. Donna Eleonora rather triumphed than mourned over a catastrophe which restored my injured honor, and sent me large remittances for my travels abroad till the affair had blown over.

Not to dwell on different circumstances, suffice it to say, that I embarked for Italy, and equipped myself so as to make a respectable figure at the several courts.

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While I was endeavoring to beguile the weary hours of absence, Helena was weeping at home from the same cause. Instead of joining in the family resentment, her heart was panting for a compromise, and for my speedy return. Six months had already elapsed, and I firmly believe that her constancy would have been proof against the track of time, had time been seconded by no more powerful ally. Don Blas de Combados, a gentleman from the western coast of Galicia, came to Coria, to take possession of a rich inheritance unsuccessfully contested by a near relation. He liked that country so much better than his own, that he made it his principal residence. Combados was a personable man. His manners were gentle and well bred, his conversation most insinuating. With such a passport, he soon got into the best company, and knew all the family concerns of the place.

It was not long before he heard of Don George's daughter, and of her extraordinary beauty. This touched his curiosity nearly; he was eager to behold so formidable a lady. For this purpose, he endeavored to worm himself into the good graces of her father, and succeeded so well, that the old gentleman, already looking on him as a son-in-law, gave him free admission to the house, and the liberty of conversing with Donna Helena in his presence. The Galician soon became deeply enamoured of her; indeed, it was the common fate of all who had ever beheld her charms. He opened his heart to Don George, who consented to his paying his addresses, but told

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him that so far from offering violence to her inclination, he should never interfere in her choice. Hereupon Don Blas pressed every device that impassioned ingenuity could suggest into his service, to melt and warm the icicles of reserve; but the lady was impenetrable to his arts, fast bound in the fetters of an earlier love. Felicia, however, was in the new suitor's interest, convinced of his merit by the universal argument. All the faculties of her soul were called forth in his cause. On the other hand, the father urged his wishes and entreaties. Thus was Donna Helena tormented for a whole year with their importunities, and yet her faith continued unshaken.

Combados, finding that Don George and Felicia took up his cause with very little success, proposed an expedient for conquering prejudice to the following effect. We will suppose a merchant of Coria to have received a letter from his Italian correspondent, in which, among the news of the day, there shall be the following paragraph: "A Spanish gentleman, Don Gaston de Cogollos, has lately arrived at the court of Parma. He is said to be nephew and sole heir to a rich widow of Coria. He is paying his addresses to a nobleman's daughter; but the family wishes to ascertain the validity of his pretensions. Send me word, therefore, whether you know this Don Gaston, together with the amount of his aunt's fortune. On your answer the marriage will depend. Parma, . . . day of, &c."

The old gentleman considered this trick as a mere

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ebullition of humor, a lawful stratagem of amorous warfare; and the jade of a go-between, with conscience still more callous than her master's, was delighted with the probability of the manœuvre. It seemed to be so much the more happily imagined, as they knew Helena to be a proud girl, capable of taking decisive measures in the moment of surprise and indignation. Don George undertook to be the herald of my fickleness, and by way of coloring the contrivance more naturally, to confront the pretended correspondent with her. This project was executed as soon as formed. The father, with counterfeit emotions of displeasure, said to Donna Helena, Daughter, it is not enough now to tell you that our relations inveigh against an alliance with Don Austin's murderer; a still stronger reason henceforward presses to detach you from Don Gaston. It may well overwhelm you with shame to have been his dupe so long. Here is an undeniable proof of his inconstancy. Only read this letter, just received by a merchant of Coria from Italy. The trembling Helena caught at this forged paper, glanced over the writing, then weighed every expression, and stood aghast at the import of the whole. A keen pang of disappointment wrung from her a few reluctant tears; but pride came to her assistance; she wiped away the falling drops of weakness, and said to her father, in a determined tone, Sir, you have just been witness of my folly; now bear testimony to my triumph over myself. The delusion is past; Don Gaston is the object of my utter contempt. I am ready to

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meet Don Blas at the altar, and be beforehand with the traitor in the pledge of our transferred affections. Don George, transported with joy at this change, embraced his daughter, extolled her spirit to the skies, and hastened the necessary preparations, with all the self-complacency of a successful plotter.

Thus was Donna Helena snatched from me. She threw herself into the arms of Combados in a pet, not listening to the secret whispers of love within her breast, nor suspecting a story which ought to have seemed so improbable in the annals of true passion. The haughty are always the victims of their own rash conclusions. Resentment of insulted beauty triumphed wholly over the suggestions of tenderness: And yet, a few days after marriage, there came over her some feelings of remorse for her precipitation; it struck her that the letter might have been a forgery; and the very possibility disturbed her peace. But the enamoured Don Blas left his wife no time to nurse up thoughts injurious to their new-found joys; a succession of gayety and pleasure kept her in a thoughtless whirl, and shielded her from the pangs of unavailing repentance.

She appeared to be in high good humor with so spirit-stirring a husband, so that they were living together in perfect unanimity, when my aunt adjusted my affair with Don Austin's relations. Of this she wrote me word to Italy. I returned on the wings of love. Donna Eleonora, not having announced the marriage, informed me of it on my arrival, and remarking what pain it gave me, said,

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You are in the wrong, nephew, to show so much feeling for a faithless fair. Banish from your memory a person so unworthy to share in its tender recollections.

As my aunt did not know how Donna Helena had been played upon, she had reason to talk as she did; nor could she have given me better advice. To affect indifference, if not to conquer my passion, was my bounden duty. Yet there could be no harm in just inquiring by what means this union had been brought to bear. To get at the truth, I determined on applying to Felicia's friend, Theodora. There I met with Felicia herself, who was confounded at my unwelcome presence, and would have escaped from the necessity of explanation. But I stopped her. Why do you avoid me? said I. Has your perjured mistress forbidden you to give ear to my complaints? or would you make a merit with the ungrateful woman of your voluntary refusal?

Sir, answered the plotting abigail, I confess my fault, and throw myself on your mercy. Your appearance here has filled me with remorse. My mistress has been betrayed, and unhappily in part by my agency. The particulars of their infernal device followed this avowal, with an endeavor to make me amends for its lamentable consequence. To this effect, she offered me her services with her mistress, and promised to undeceive her; in a word, to work night and day, that she might soften the rigor of my sufferings, and open the career of hope.

I pass over the numberless contradictions she ex-

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perienced before she could accomplish the projected interview. It was at length arranged to admit me privately, while Don Blas was at his hunting-seat. The plot did not linger, The husband went into the country, and they sent for me to his lady's apartment.

My onset was reproachful in the extreme, but my mouth was soon shut upon the subject. It is useless to look back upon the past, said the lady. It can be no part of our present intention to work upon each other's feelings; and you are grievously mistaken if you fancy me inclined to flatter your aspiring hopes. My sole inducement for receiving you here was to tell you personally that you have only henceforth to forget me. Perhaps I might have been better satisfied with my lot had it been united with yours; but, since heaven has ordered it otherwise, we must submit to its decrees.

What! madam, answered I, is it not enough to have lost you, to see my successful rival in quiet possession of all my soul holds dear, but I must also banish you from my thoughts? You would tear from me even my passion, my only remaining blessing! And think you that a man, whom you have once enchanted, can recover his self-possession? Know yourself better, and cease to enforce impracticable behests. Well then! if so, rejoined she with hurried importunity, do you cease to flatter yourself with interesting my gratitude or my pity. In one short word, the wife of Don Blas shall never be the mistress of Don Gaston. Let us at once end a conversation at

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which delicacy revolts in spite of virtue, and peremptorily forbids its longer continuance.

I now threw myself at the lady's feet in despair. All the powers of language and of tears were called forth to soften her. But even this served only to excite some inbred sentiments of compassion, stifled as soon as born, and sacrificed at the shrine of duty. After having fruitlessly exhausted all my stores of tender persuasion, rage took possession of my breast. I drew my sword, and would have fallen on its point before the inexorable Helena; but she saw my design, and prevented it. Stay your rash hand, Cogollos, said she. Is it thus that you consult my reputation? In dying thus, and here, you will brand me with dishonor, and my husband with the imputation of murder.

In the agony of my despair, far from yielding to these suggestions, I only struggled against the preventive efforts of the two women, and should have struggled too successfully, if Don Blas had not appeared to second them. He had been apprised of our assignation, and, instead of going into the country, had concealed himself behind the hangings, to overhear our conference. Don Gaston, cried he, as he arrested my uplifted arm, recall your scattered senses, and no longer give a loose to these mad transports.

Here I could hold no longer. Is it for you, said I, to turn me from my resolution? You ought rather yourself to plunge a dagger in my bosom. My love, with all its train of miseries, is

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an insult to you. Have you not surprised me in your wife's apartment at this unseasonable hour? What greater provocation can you want for your revenge? Stab me, and rid yourself of a man who can only give up the adoration of Donna Helena with his life. It is in vain, answered Don Blas, that you endeavor to interest my honor in your destruction. You are sufficiently punished for your rashness; and my wife's imprudence, in giving you this opportunity of indulging it, is sanctified by the purity of her sentiments. Take my advice, Cogollos: shrink not effeminately from your wayward destiny, but bear up against it with the patient courage of a hero.

The prudent Galician, by such language, gradually composed the ferment of my mind, and waked me once more to virtue. I withdrew in the determination of removing far from the scene of my folly, and went for Madrid two days afterwards. There, pursuing the career of fortune and preferment, I appeared at court, and laid myself out for connections. But it was my ill luck to attach myself particularly to the Marquis of Villareal, a Portuguese grandee, who, lying under a suspicion of intending to emancipate his country from the Spanish yoke, is now in the castle of Alicant. As the Duke of Lerma knew me to be closely connected with this nobleman, he gave orders for my arrest and detention here. That minister thought me capable of engaging in such a project — he could not have offered a more outrageous affront to a man of noble birth and a Castilian.

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Don Gaston thus ended his story. By way of consolation I said to him, Illustrious sir, your honor can receive no taint from this temporary detainer, and your interest will probably be promoted by it in the end. When the Duke of Lerma shall be convinced of your innocence, he will not fail to give you a considerable post, and thus retrieve the character of a gentleman unjustly accused of treason.

CHAPTER VII.

SCIPIO FINDS GIL BLAS OUT IN THE TOWER OF SEGOVIA, AND BRINGS HIM A BUDGET OF NEWS.

Our conversation was interrupted by Tordesillas, who came into the room, and addressed me thus: Signor Gil Blas, I have just been speaking with a young man at the prison gate. He inquired if you were not here, and looked much mortified at my refusal to satisfy his curiosity. Noble governor, said he, with tears in his eyes, do not reject my most humble petition. I am Signor de Santillane's principal domestic, and you will do an act of charity by allowing me to see him. You pass for a kind-hearted gentleman in Segovia; I hope you will not deny me the favor of conversing for a few minutes with my dear master, who is unfortunate rather than criminal. In short, continued Don Andrew, the lad was so importunate, that I promised to comply with his wishes this evening.

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I assured Tordesillas that he could not have pleased me better than by bringing this young man to me, who could probably communicate tidings of the last importance. I waited with impatience for the entrance of my faithful Scipio, since I could not doubt him to be the man; nor was I mistaken in my conjecture. He was introduced at the time appointed; and his joy, which only mine could equal, broke forth into the most whimsical demonstrations. On my side, in the ecstasy of delight, I stretched out my arms to him, and he rushed into them with no courtly, measured embrace. All distinctions of master and dependant were levelled in the sympathetic rapture of our meeting.

When our transports had subsided a little, I inquired into the state of my household. You have neither household nor house, answered he: to spare you a long string of questions, I will sum up your worldly concerns in two words. Your property has been pillaged at both ends, both by the banditti of the law and by your own retainers, who, regarding you as a ruined man, paid themselves their own wages out of whatever they found that was portable. Luckily for you, I had the dexterity to save from their harpy clutches two large bags of double pistoles. Salero, in whose custody I deposited them, will make restitution on your release, which cannot be far distant, as you were put upon his majesty's pension list of prisoners without the Duke of Lerma's knowledge or consent.

I asked Scipio how he knew his excellency to have

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had no share in my arrest. You may depend on it, answered he, my information is undeniable. One of my friends in the Duke of Uzeda's confidence acquainted me with all the circumstances of your imprisonment. Calderona, having discovered by a spy that Signora Sirena, with the handle of an alias to her name, was receiving night visits from the Prince of Spain, and that the Count de Lemos managed that intrigue by the pandarism of Signor de Santillane, determined to be revenged on the whole knot. To this end, he waited on the Duke of Uzeda, and discovered the whole affair. The duke, overjoyed at such a fine opportunity of ruining his enemy, did not fail to bestir himself. He laid his information before the king, and painted the prince's danger in the most lively colors. His majesty was much angered, and showed that he was so by sending Sirena to the nunnery provided for such frail sisters, banishing the Count de Lemos, and condemning Gil Blas to perpetual imprisonment.

This, pursued Scipio, is what my friend told me. Hence you gather your misfortune to be the Duke of Uzeda's handiwork, or rather Calderona's.

Thus it seemed probable that my affairs might be reinstated in time; that the Duke of Lerma, chagrined at his nephew's banishment, would move heaven and earth for that nobleman's recall; and it might not be too much to expect that his excellency would not forget me. What a delicate gypsy is hope! She wheedled me out of all anxiety about my shattered fortunes, and made me as light-hearted as if I had

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good reason to be so. My prison looked not like the dungeon of perpetual misery, but like the vestibule to a more distinguished station. For thus run the train of my reasoning: Don Fernando Borgia, Father Jerome of Florence, and more than all, Friar Louis of Aliaga, who may thank him for his place about the king's person, are the prime minister's partisans. With the aid of such powerful friends, his excellency will bear down all opposition, even supposing no change to take place in the political barometer. But his majesty's health is very precarious. The first act of a new reign would be to recall the Count de Lemos; he would not feel himself at home in the young monarch's presence till he had introduced me at court; and the young monarch would not sit easy on his throne till he had showered benefits on my head. Thus, feasting by anticipation on the pleasures of futurity, I became callous to existing evils. The two bags, snug in the goldsmith's custody, were no bad doubles to the part which hope acted in this shifting pantomime.

It was impossible not to express my gratitude to Scipio for his zeal and honesty. I offered him half the salvage; but he rejected it. I expect, said he, a very different acknowledgment. Astonished as much at his mysterious claim as at his refusal, I asked what more I could do for him. Let us never part, answered he. Allow me to link my fate with yours. I feel for you what I never felt for any other master. And on my part, my good fellow, said I, you may rest assured that your attachment is not thrown away.

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You caught my fancy at first sight. We must have been born under Libra or Gemini, where friendship is lord of the ascendant. I willingly accept your proffered partnership, and will commence business by prevailing with the warden to immure you along with me in this tower. That is the very thing, exclaimed he. You were beforehand with me, for I was just going to beg that favor. Your company is dearer to me than liberty itself. I shall only just go to Madrid now and then, to snuff the gale of the ministerial atmosphere, and try whether any scent lies which may be favorable for your pursuit. Thus will you combine in me a bosom friend, a trusty messenger, and an unsuspected spy.

These advantages were too important for me to forego them. I therefore kept so useful a person about me, with leave of the obliging warden, who would not stand in the way of so soothing a relief to the weariness of solitude.

CHAPTER VIII.

SCIPIO'S FIRST JOURNEY TO MADRID: ITS OBJECT AND SUCCESS. GIL BLAS FALLS SICK. THE CONSEQUENCE OF HIS ILLNESS.

If it is a common proverb that our direst enemies are those of our own household, the converse ought equally to be admitted among the saws of a more candid experience. After such incontestable proof

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of Scipio's zeal, he became to me like another self. All distinction of place was confounded between Gil Blas and his secretary; all insolence was dropped on the one hand, all cringing on the other. Their lodging, bed, and board were in common.

Scipio's conversation was of a very lively turn; he might have been dubbed the Spanish Momus, without any derogation to the Punch of the Pantheon. But he had a long head, as well as a fanciful brain, combining the characters of counsellor and jester. My friend, said I, one day, what do you think of writing to the Duke of Lerma? It could, methinks, do no harm. Why, as to that, answered he, the great are such chameleons, that there is no knowing where to have them. At all events, you may risk it; though I would not lay the postage of your letter on its success. The minister loves you, it is true; but then political love lacks memory as much as personal love lacks visual discrimination. Out of sight, out of mind! is at once the motto and the stigma of these gentry.

True as this may be in the general, replied I, my patron is a glorious exception. His kindness lives in my recollection. I am persuaded that he suffers for my sufferings, and that they are incessantly preying on his spirits. We must give him credit for only waiting till the king's anger shall pass away. Be it so, resumed he; I wish you may not reckon without your host. Assail his excellency then with an epistle to stir the waters. I will engage to deliver it into his own hands. Pen, ink, and paper

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being brought, I composed a specimen of eloquence which Scipio declared to be a paragon of pathos, and Tordesillas preferred, for the cant of sermonizing prolixity, to the old archbishop's homilies.

I flattered myself that there would be tears in the Duke of Lerma's eyes, and distraction in his aspect, at the detail of miseries which existed only on paper. In that assurance, I despatched my messenger, who no sooner got to Madrid, than he went to the minister's. Meeting with an old domestic of my acquaintance, he had no difficulty in gaining access to the duke. My lord, said Scipio to his excellency, as he delivered the packet, one of your most devoted servants, lying at his length on straw, in a damp and dreary dungeon at Segovia, most humbly supplicates for the perusal of this letter, which a tender-hearted turnkey has furnished him with the means of writing. The minister opened the letter, and glanced over the contents. But though he found there a motive and a cue for passion enough to amaze all his faculties at once, far from drowning the floor with briny secretions, he cleaved the ear of his household, and smote the heart of my courier with horrid speech: Friend, tell Santillane that he has a great deal of impudence to address me, after so rank an offence, worthily confronted by the severe sentence of the king. Under that sentence let the wretch drag out his days, nor look to my mediation for a respite.

Scipio, though neither dull nor muddy-mettled, began to be unpregnant of this defeated cause. Yet he was not so pigeon-livered as to retire without an

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effort in my favor. My lord, replied he, this poor prisoner will give up the ghost with grief at the recital of your excellency's displeasure. The duke answered like a prime minister, with a supercilious corrugation of features, and a decisive revolution of his front to some more prosperous suitor. This he did to cover his own share in the shame of pimping; and such treatment must all these hireling scavengers expect, who rake in the filth and ordure of rotten statesmen, courtiers, and politicians.

My secretary came back to Segovia, and delivered the result of his mission. And now behold me, sunk deeper than on the first day of my imprisonment in the gulf of affliction and despair! The Duke of Lerma's turning king's evidence gave a hanging posture to my affairs. My courage was run out; and though they did all they could to keep up my spirits, the agitation and distress of my mind threw me into a fever.

The warden, who took a lively interest in my recovery, fancying in his unmedical head that physicians cured fevers, brought me a double dose of death in two of that doleful deity's most practised executioners. Signor Gil Blas, said he, as he ushered in their grisly forms, here are two godsons of Hippocrates, who are come to feel your pulse, and to augment the number of their trophies in your person. I was so prejudiced against the whole faculty, that I should certainly have given them a very discouraging reception, had life retained its usual charms in my estimation; but being bent on

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my departure from this vale of tears, I felt obliged to Tordesillas for hastening my journey by a safer conveyance than the crime of suicide.

My good sir, said one of the pair, your recovery will, under Providence, depend on your entire confidence in our skill. Implicit confidence! answered I: with your assistance, I am fully persuaded that a few days will place me beyond the reach of fever, and all the shocks that flesh is heir to. Yes! with the blessing of heaven, rejoined he, it is a consummation devoutly to be wished, and easily to be effected. At all events, our best endeavors shall not be wanting. And indeed it was no joke; for they got me into such fine training for the other world, that few of my material particles were left in this. Already had Don Andrew, observing me fumble with the sheets, and smile upon my fingers' ends, and thinking there was but one way, sent for a Franciscan to show it me: already had the good father, having mumbled over the salvation of my soul, retired to the refection of his own body: and my own opinion leaned to the immediate necessity of making a good end. I beckoned Scipio to my bedside. My dear friend, said I, in the faint accents of a tortured and evacuated patient, I give and bequeath to you one of the bags in Gabriel's possession; the other you must carry to my father and mother in the Asturias, who, if still living, must be in narrow circumstances. But, alas! I fear they have not been able to bear up against my ingratitude. Muscada's report of my unnatural behavior must have

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brought their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. Should Heaven have fortified their tender hearts against my indifference, you will give them the bag of doubloons, with assurances of my dying remorse; and, if they are no more, I charge you to lay out the money in masses for the repose of their souls and of mine. Then did I stretch out my hand, which he bathed in silent tears. It is not always true that the mourning of an heir is mirth in masquerade.

For some hours I fancied myself outward-bound, and on the point of sailing; but the wind changed. My pilots having quitted the helm, and left the vessel to the steerage of nature, the danger of shipwreck disappeared. The fever mutinying against its commanding officers, gave all their prognostics the lie, and acted contrary to general orders. I got better by degrees, in mind as well as in body. My consolation was all derived from within. I looked at wealth and honors with the eye of a dying anchorite, and blessed the malady which restored my soul. I abjured courts, politics, and the Duke of Lerma. If ever my prison doors were opened, it was my fixed resolve to buy a cottage, and live like a philosopher.

My bosom friend applauded my design, and to further its execution, undertook a second journey to solicit my release, by the intervention of a clever girl about the person of the prince's nurse. He contended that a prison was a prison still, in spite of kind indulgence and good cheer. In this I agreed, and

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gave him leave to depart, with a fervent prayer to Heaven that we might soon take possession of our hermitage.

CHAPTER IX.

SCIPIO'S SECOND JOURNEY TO MADRID. GIL BLAS IS SET AT LIBERTY ON CERTAIN CONDITIONS. THEIR DEPARTURE FROM THE TOWER OF SEGOVIA, AND CONVERSATION ON THEIR JOURNEY.

WHILE waiting for Scipio's return from Madrid, I began a course of study. Tordesillas furnished me with more books than I wanted. He borrowed them from an old officer who could not read, but had fitted up a magnificent library, that he might pass for a man of learning. Above all, I delighted in moral essays and treatises, because they abounded in commonplaces, according with my antipathy to courts, and philosophic relish of solitude.

Three weeks elapsed before I heard a syllable from my negotiator, who returned at length with a cheerful countenance, and news to the following effect: By the intercession of a hundred pistoles with the chambermaid, and her intercession with her mistress, the Prince of Spain has been prevailed with to plead for your enlargement with his royal father. I hastened hither to announce these happy tidings, and must return immediately to put the last hand to my work. With these words he left me, and went back to court.

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At the week's end my expeditious agent returned, with the intelligence that the prince had procured my liberty, not without some difficulty. On the same day my generous keeper confirmed the assurance in person, with the kindest congratulations, and the following notice: Your prison doors are open, but on two conditions, which I am sorry that my duty obliges me to announce, because they will probably be disagreeable to you. His majesty expressly forbids you to show your face at court, or to be found within the limits of the two Castiles on this day month. I am extremely sorry that you are interdicted from court. And I am delighted at it, answered I. Witness all the powers above! I asked the king for only one favor; he has granted me two.

With my liberty thus confirmed, I hired a couple of mules, on which we mounted the next day, after taking leave of Cogollos, and thanking Tordesillas a thousand times for all his instances of friendship. We set forward cheerfully on the road to Madrid, to draw our deposit out of Signor Gabriel's hands, amounting to a thousand doubloons. On the road my fellow-traveller observed, If we are not rich enough to purchase a splendid property, we can at least secure ease and competency to ourselves. A cabin, answered I, would be large enough for my most ambitious thoughts. Though scarcely at the middle period of life, the world has lost its charms for me; its hopes, its fears, its cares, its duties are all absorbed in the selfishness of philosophical retirement. Independently of these principles, I can assure you I

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have painted for myself a rural landscape, with a foreground of innocent pleasures, and pastoral simplicity in the perspective. Already does the enamel of the meadows glitter under my eyes; already does the river's murmur accord with the winged chorus of the grove: hunting exasperates the manly virtues, and fishing preaches patience. Only figure to yourself, my friend, what a continual round of amusement solitude may furnish, and you will pant to be admitted of her crew. Then, for the economy of our table, the simplest will be the cheapest, and of course the best. Unadulterated Ceres shall be our official caterer; when hunger shall have tamed our fastidious appetites into sobriety, a mumbled crust will relish like an ortolan. The supreme delight of eating is not in the thing ate, but in the palate of him who eats — a proposition in culinary philosophy proved by the frequent loathing of my own stomach, through a long series of ministerial dinners. Abstemiousness is a luxury of the most exquisite refinement, and the best recipe in the materia medica.

With your good leave, Signor Gil Blas, interrupted my secretary, I am not altogether of your mind respecting the luscious treat of abstemiousness. Why should we mess like the bankrupt sages of antiquity? Surely we may indulge the carnal man a little, without any reasonable offence to the spiritual. Since we have, by the blessing of Providence and my forecast, wherewithal to keep the spit and the spigot in exercise, do not let us take up our abode with famine and wretchedness. As soon

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as we get settled, we must stock our cellar, and establish a respectable larder, like people who know what is what, and do not separate themselves from the vulgar crowd to renounce the good things of this life, but to taste them with a more exquisite relish. As Hesiod says,

> Enjoy thy riches with a liberal soul;
> Plenteous the feast, and smiling be the bowl.

And again,

> To stint the wine a frugal husband shows,
> When from the middle of the cask it flows.

What the devil, Master Scipio, interrupted I in my turn, you can cap verses out of the Greek poets! And pray where did you get acquainted with Hesiod? In very learned company, answered he. I lived some time with a walking dictionary at Salamanca, a fellow up to the elbows in quotation and commentary. He could put a large volume together like a house of cards. His library furnished him with a hodge-podge of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin commonplaces, which he translated into buckram Castilian. As I was his transcriber, some tags of verses, stings of epigrams, and sage truisms stuck by the way. With such an apparatus, replied I, your memory must be most philosophically stocked. But, not to lose sight of our future prospects, whereabouts in Spain had we best fix our Socratic abode? My voice is for Arragon, resumed my counsellor. We shall there enjoy all the beauties of nature, and lead the life of Paradise. Well, then, for Arragon, said

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I. May it teem with all the dear delights that youthful poets fancy when they dream!

CHAPTER X.

THEIR DOINGS AT MADRID. THE RENCOUNTER OF GIL BLAS IN THE STREET, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

On our arrival in Madrid, we alighted at a little public house where Scipio had been accustomed to put up, whence our first visit was to my banker, Salero. He received us very cordially, and expressed the highest satisfaction at my release. Indeed, added he, your untoward fate touched me so nearly as to change my views of a political alliance. The fortunes of courtiers are like castles in the air; so I have married my daughter Gabriela to a wealthy trader. You have acted very wisely, answered I; for besides that a bird in the hand is worth two in a bush, when a plodding citizen aspires to the honor of bringing a man of fashion into his family, he very often has an impertinent puppy for his son-in-law.

Then changing the topic, and coming to the point, Signor Gabriel, pursued I, we came to talk a little about the two thousand pistoles which . . . Your money is all ready, said the goldsmith, interrupting me. He then took us into his closet, and delivered the two bags, carefully labelled with my name on them.

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I thanked Salero for his exactness, and heaven in my sleeve for my escape from his daughter. At our inn, we counted over the money, and found it right, deducting fifty doubloons for the expenses of my enlargement. Our thoughts were now wholly bent upon Arragon. My secretary undertook to buy a carriage and two mules. It was my office to provide household and body linen. During my peregrinations for that purpose, I met Baron Steinbach, the officer in the German Guards with whom Don Alphonso had been brought up.

I touched my hat to him; he knew me again, and returned my greeting warmly. My joy is extreme, said I, at seeing your lordship in such fine health, to say nothing of my wish to inquire after Don Cæsar and Don Alphonso de Leyva. They are both in Madrid, answered he, and staying at my house. They came to town about three months ago, to be presented on occasion of Don Alphonso's promotion. He has been appointed Governor of Valencia, on the score of old family claims, without having in any shape pushed his interest at court. Nothing could be more grateful to his feelings, or prove more strongly our royal master's goodness, who delights to recognize the merits of ancestry in the persons of their descendants.

Though I knew more of this matter than Steinbach, I kept my knowledge in the background. Yet so lively was my impatience to hail my old masters, that he would not damp my ardor by delay. I had a mind to try Don Alphonso, whether he still re-

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tained his regard for me. He was playing at chess with Baroness Steinbach. On my entrance, he started up from his game, ran towards me, and squeezing me tight in his embrace, Santillane, said he, with demonstrations of the sincerest joy, at length, then, you are restored to my heart. I am delighted at it! It was not my fault that we ever parted. You may remember how strongly I urged you not to withdraw from the Castle of Leyva. You were deaf to my entreaties. But I must not chide your obstinacy, because its motive was the peace of the family. Yet you ought to have let me hear from you, and to have spared my fruitless inquiries at Grenada, where my brother-in-law, Don Ferdinand, sent me word that you were.

And now tell me what you are doing at Madrid. Of course you have some situation here. Be assured that I shall always take a lively interest in your concerns. Sir, answered I, it is but four months since I occupied a considerable post at court. I had the honor of being the Duke of Lerma's confidential secretary. Can it be possible? exclaimed Don Alphonso, as if he could scarcely believe his ears. What, were you so near the person of the prime minister? I then related how I had gained and lost his favor, and ended with avowing my determination to buy a cottage and garden with the wreck of my shattered fortunes.

The son of Don Cæsar heard me attentively, and made this answer: My dear Gil Blas, you know how I have always loved you; nor shall you longer be

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fortune's puppet. I will set you above her vagaries, by securing you an independence. Since you declare for a country life, a little estate of ours near Lirias, about four leagues from Valencia, shall be settled on you. You are acquainted with the spot. Such a present we can make without putting ourselves to the least inconvenience. I can answer for my father's joining in the act, and for Seraphina's entire approbation.

I threw myself at Don Alphonso's feet, who raised me immediately. More penetrated by his affection than by his bounty, I pressed his hand and said, Sir, your conduct charms me. Your noble gift is the more welcome, as it precedes the knowledge of a service it has been in my power to render you; and I had rather owe it to your generosity than to your gratitude. This governor of my making did not know what to understand by the hint, and pressed for an explanation. I gave it in full, to his utter astonishment. Neither he nor Baron Steinbach could ever have the slightest suspicion that the government of Valencia was owing to my interest at court. Yet, having no reason to doubt the fact, my friend proposed to grant me an annuity of two thousand ducats, in addition to the little farm at Lirias.

Hold your hand, Signor Don Alphonso, exclaimed I at this offer. You must not set my avarice afloat again. I am myself a living witness, that fortune may give superfluities to her favorites, but has no competence to bestow. With pleasure will I accept

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of the estate at Lirias, where my present property will be sufficient for all my wants. Rather than increase my cares with my possessions, I would build a hospital out of my existing funds. Riches are a burden; and it must be a foolish animal that would bear fardels in the manger or the field.

While we were talking after this fashion, Don Cæsar came in. His joy was not less than his son's at the sight of me; and being informed of the family obligations, he again pressed me to accept of the annuity, which I again refused. When the writings were drawn, the father and son made the assignment their joint act and deed, transferring to me the fee simple, and putting me in immediate possession. My secretary half stared the eyes out of his head when I told him we had a landed estate of our own, and how we came by it. What is the value of this little freehold? says he. Five hundred ducats per annum, answered I; and the farm in high cultivation, within a ring fence. I have often been there during my stewardship. There is a small house on the banks of the Guadalaviar, in a little hamlet, surrounded by a charming country.

What pleases me better than all, cried Scipio, is, that we shall have plenty of sporting, rare living, and excellent wine. Come, master, let us leave this crowded city, and hasten to our hermitage. I long to be there as much as you can do, answered I; but I must first go to the Asturias. My father and mother are not in comfortable circumstances. They shall therefore end their days with me at Lirias.

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Heaven, perhaps, has thrown this windfall in my way to try my filial duty, and would punish me for the neglect of it. Scipio approved my purpose, and urged its speedy execution. Yes, my friend, said I, we will set out as soon as possible. I shall consider it as my dear delight to share the gifts of fortune with the authors of my existence. We shall soon be settled in our country retreat; and then will I write these two Latin verses over the door of my farm-house, in letters of gold, for the pious edification of my rustic neighbors: —

Inveni portum. Spes et fortuna, valete,
Sat me lusistis; ludite nunc alios.

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BOOK THE TENTH.

CHAPTER I.

GIL BLAS SETS OUT FOR THE ASTURIAS, AND PASSES THROUGH VALLADOLID, WHERE HE GOES TO SEE HIS OLD MASTER, DOCTOR SANGRADO. BY ACCIDENT, HE COMES ACROSS SIGNOR MANUEL ORDONNEZ, GOVERNOR OF THE HOSPITAL.

JUST as I was arranging matters to take my departure from Madrid, and go with Scipio to the Asturias, Paul V. gave the Duke of Lerma a cardinal's hat. This pope, wishing to establish the inquisition in the kingdom of Naples, invested the minister with the purple, and by that means hoped to bring King Philip over to so pious and praiseworthy a design. Those who were best acquainted with this new member of the sacred college, thought, much like myself, that the church was in a fair way for apostolical purity, after so ghostly an acquisition.

Scipio, who would have liked better to see me once more blazing at court, than either cloistered or rusticated, advised me to show my face at the cardinal's audience. Perhaps, said he, his eminence, finding you at large by the king's order, may think it unnecessary to affect any further displeasure against you, and may even reinstate you in his service. My good friend Scipio, answered I, you

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seem to forget that my liberty was granted only on condition of making myself scarce in the two Castiles. Besides, can you suppose me so soon inclined to become an absentee from my domain of Lirias? I have told you before, and I tell it you once again, Though the Duke of Lerma should restore me to his good graces, though he should even offer me Don Rodrigo de Calderona's place, I would refuse it. My resolution is taken; I mean to go and find out my parents at Oviedo, and carry them with me to Valencia. As for you, my good fellow, if you repent of having linked your fate with mine, you have only to say so; I am ready to give you half of my ready money, and you may stay at Madrid, where fortune puts on her kindest smiles to those who woo her lustily.

What, then, replied my secretary, a little affected by these words, can you suspect me of any unwillingness to follow you into your retreat? The very idea is an injury to my zeal and my attachment. What, Scipio! that faithful appendage, who would willingly have passed the remnant of his days with you in the tower of Segovia, rather than abandon you to your wretched fate, can he feel sorrowful at the prospect of an abode where a thousand rural delights are waiting to smile on his arrival? No, no, I have not a wish to turn you aside from your resolution. Nor can I refrain from owning my malicious drift; when I advised you to show your face at the Duke of Lerma's audience, it was for the purpose of ascertaining whether any seedlings of

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ambition were scattered among the fallows of your philosophy. Since that point is settled, and you are mortified to all the pomps and vanities of the world, let us make the best of our way from court, to go and suck in with Zephyrus and Flora the innocent, delicious pleasures so luxuriant in the nursery of our imaginations.

In fact, we soon afterwards took our departure together, in a chaise drawn by two good mules, driven by a postilion whom I had added to my establishment. We stopped the first day at Alcala de Henarès, and the second at Segovia, whence, without stopping to see our generous warden, Tordesillas, we went forward to Penafiel on the Duero, and the next day to Valladolid. At sight of this large town, I could not help fetching a deep sigh. My companion, surprised at that conscientious ventilation, inquired the reason of it. My good fellow, said I, it is because I practised medicine here for a long time. It gives me the horrors, even now, to think of my unexpiated murders. The whole list of killed and wounded are mustered in battle array yonder: the tomb and the hospital yawn with their disgorged inhabitants, who are rushing on to tear me piecemeal, and exact the vengeance due to the drenched crew. What a dreadful fancy! said my secretary. In truth, Signor de Santillane, your nature is too tender. Why should you be shocked at the common course of exchange in your branch of trade? Look at all the oldest physicians: their withers are unwrung. What can exceed the self-

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complacency with which they view the exits of patients, and the entrances of diseases? Natural constitution bears the brunt of all their failures, and medical infallibility takes the credit of lucky accidents.

It is very true, replied I, that Doctor Sangrado, on whose practice I formed myself, was like the rest of the old physicians in point of self-complacency. It was to little purpose that twenty people in a day yielded to his prowess: he was so persuaded that bleeding in the arm and copious libations of warm water were specifics for every case, that instead of doubting whether the death of his patients might not possibly invalidate the efficacy of his prescriptions, he ascribed the result to a vacillating compliance with his system. By all the powers! cried Scipio with a burst of laughter, you open to me an incomparable character. If you have any curiosity to be better acquainted with him, said I, it may be gratified tomorrow, should Sangrado be still living, and resident at Valladolid: but it is highly improbable; for he had one foot in the grave when I left him several years ago. Our first care, on putting up at the inn, was to inquire after this doctor. We were told that he was not dead; but, being incapacitated by age from paying visits or any other vigorous exertions, he had been superseded by three or four other doctors who had risen into repute by a new practice, accomplishing the same end by different means. We determined on lying by for a day at Valladolid, as well to rest our mules as to call on Signor Sangra-

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do. About ten o'clock next morning we knocked at his door, and found him sitting in his elbow-chair, with a book in his hand. He rose on our entrance, advanced to meet us with a firm step for a man of seventy, and begged to know our business. My worthy and approved good master, said I, have you lost all recollection of an old pupil? There was formerly one Gil Blas, as you may remember, a boarder in your house, and for some time your deputy. What! is it you, Santillane? answered he, with a cordial embrace. I should not have known you again. It, however, gives me great pleasure to see you once more. What have you been doing since we parted? Doubtless you have made medicine your profession. It was very strongly my inclination so to do, replied I; but imperious circumstances made me reluctantly abandon so illustrious a calling.

So much the worse, rejoined Sangrado: with the principles you sucked in under my tuition, you would have become a physician of the first skill and eminence, with the guiding influence of heaven to defend you from the dangerous allurements of chemistry. Ah, my son! pursued he with a mournful air, what a change in practice within these few years! The whole honor and dignity of the art is compromised. That mystery by whose inscrutable decrees the lives of men have in all ages been determined, is now laid open to the rude, untutored gaze of blockheads, novices, and mountebanks. Facts are stubborn things; and ere long the very stones will cry aloud against the rascality of these new practitioners: *lapides*

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clamabunt! Why, sir, there are fellows in this town, calling themselves physicians, who drag their degraded persons at the *currus triumphalis antimonii*, or, as it should properly be translated, the cart's tail of antimony. Apostates from the faith of Paracelsus, idolaters of filthy *kermes*, healers at haphazard, who make all the science of medicine to consist in the preparation and prescription of drugs! What a change have I to announce to you! There is not one stone left upon another in the whole structure which our great predecessors had raised. Bleeding in the feet, for example, so rarely practised in better times, is now among the fashionable follies of the day. That gentle, civilized system of evacuation, which prevailed under my auspices, is subverted by the reign of anarchy and emetics, of quackery and poison. In short, chaos is come again! Every one orders what seems good in his own eyes; there is no deference to the authority of ancient wisdom; our masters are laid upon the shelf, and their axioms not one tittle the more regarded for being delivered in languages as defunct as the subjects of their application.

However desirable it might seem to laugh at so whimsical a declamation, I had the good manners to resist the impulse; and not only that, but to inveigh bitterly against *kermes*, without knowing whether it was a vegetable or an animal, and to pour forth a commination of curses against the authors and inventors of so diabolical an engine. Scipio, observing my by-play in this scene, had a mind to come in for

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his share in the banter. Most venerable prop of the true practice, said he to Sangrado, as I am descended in the third generation from a physician of the old school, give me leave to join you in your philippic against chemical conspiracies. My late illustrious progenitor—heaven forgive him all his sins!—was so warm a partisan of Hippocrates, that he often came to blows with ignorant pretenders, who vomited forth blasphemies against that high priest of the faculty. What is bred in the bone will not come out of the flesh: I could willingly inflict tortures and death with my own hands on those rash innovators whose daring enormities you have characterized with such accuracy of discrimination and such force of language. When wretches like these gain an ascendency in civilized society, can we wonder at the disjointed condition of the world?

The times are even more out of joint than you are aware of, said the doctor. My book against the vanities and delusions of the new practice might as well have fallen still-born from the press; it seems, if anything, to have acted by contraries, and to have exasperated heresy. The apothecaries, like the Titans of old, heaping potion upon pill, and invading the Olympus of medicine, think themselves fully qualified to usurp and maintain the throne, now that it is only thought necessary to set open the doors, and to drive the enemy out at the portal or the postern by main force. They go to the length of infusing their deadly drugs into apozems and cordials, and then set themselves up against the most eminent

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of the fraternity. This contagion has spread its influence even among the cloisters. There are monks in our convents who unite surgery and pharmacy to the labors of the confessional. These medical baboons are always dipping their paws into chemistry, and inventing compositions strong enough to lay a scene of ecclesiastical mortality in the temperate abodes of peace and religion. Now, there are in Valladolid above sixty religious houses for both sexes: judge what ravage must have been made there by unmerciful pumping and the lancet misapplied. Signor Sangrado, said I, you are perfectly in the right to give these poisoners no quarter. I utter groan for groan with you, and heave the philanthropic sigh over the invaded lives of our fellow-creatures, sinking under the fell attack of so heterodox a practice. It fills me with horror to think what a dead weight chemistry may one day be to medicine, just as adulterated coin operates on national credit. Far be that evil day from this generation.

Just at this climax of our discourse, in came an old female servant, with a salver for the doctor, on which were a little light roll and a glass with two decanters, the one filled with water and the other with wine. After he had eaten a slice, he washed it down with a diluted beverage, two parts water to one of wine; but this temperate use of the good creature did not at all save him from the acrimony of my ridicule. So so, good master doctor, said I, you are fairly caught in the fact. You a wine-bibber? you, who have entered the lists like a knight-errant

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against that unauthenticated fermentation? you, who reached your grand climacteric on the strength of the pure element? How long have you been so at odds with yourself? Your time of life can be no excuse for the alteration? since, in one passage of your writings, you define old age to be a natural consumption, which withers and attenuates the system; and as an inference from that position, you reprobate the ignorance of those writers who dignify wine with the appellation of old men's milk. What can you say, therefore, in your own defence?

You belabor me most unjustly, answered the old physician. If I drank neat wine, you would have a right to treat me as a deserter from my own standard; but your eyes may convince you that my wine is well mixed. Another heresy, my dear apostle of the wells and fountains! replied I. Recollect how you rated the canon Sedillo for drinking wine, though plentifully dashed with the salubrious fluid. Own modestly and candidly that your theory was unfounded and fanciful, and that wine is not a poisonous liquor, as you have so falsely and scandalously libelled it in your works, any further than, like any other of nature's bounties, it may be abused to excess.

This lecture sat rather uneasily on our doctor's feelings as a candidate for consistency. He could not deny his inveteracy against the use of wine in all his publications; but pride and vanity not allowing him to acknowledge the justice of my attack on his apostasy, he was left without a word to say for

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himself. Not wishing to push my sarcasm beyond the bounds of good humor, I changed the subject; and after a few minutes' longer stay, took my leave, gravely exhorting him to maintain his ground against the new practitioners. Courage, Signor Sangrado! said I: never be weary of setting your wits against *kermes;* and deafen the health-dispensing tribe with your thunders against the use of bleeding in the feet. If, spite of all your zeal and affection for medical orthodoxy, this empiric generation should succeed in supplanting true and legitimate practice, it will be at least your consolation to have exhausted your best endeavors in the support of truth and reason.

As my secretary and myself were walking to the inn, making our observations in high glee on the doctor's entertaining and original character, a man from fifty-five to sixty years of age happened to pass near us in the street, walking with his eyes fixed on the ground, and a large rosary in his hand. I conned over the distinctive cut of his appearance most cunningly, and was rewarded in the recognition of Signor Manuel Ordonnez, that faithful trustee for the affairs of the hospital, of whom so honorable mention is made in the first volume of these true and instructive memoirs. Accosting him with the most profound and unquestionable tokens of respect, I paid my compliments in due form and order to the venerable and trustworthy Signor Manuel Ordonnez, the man of all the world in whose hands the interests of the poor and needy are most safely and beneficially placed. At these words he looked me steadfastly in

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the face, and answered that my features were not altogether strange to him, but that he could not recollect where he had seen me. I used to go backwards and forwards to your house, replied I, when one of my friends, by name Fabricio Nunez, was in your service. Ah! I recollect the circumstance at once, rejoined the worthy director with a cunning leer, and have good reason to do so; for you were a brace of pleasant lads, and were by no means backward in the little scape-grace tricks of youth and inexperience. Well! and what is become of poor Fabricio? Whenever he comes across my thoughts, I cannot help feeling a little uneasy about his temporal and eternal welfare.

It was to relieve your mind upon that subject, said I to Signor Manuel, that I have taken the liberty of stopping you in the street. Fabricio is settled at Madrid, where he employs himself in publishing miscellanies and collections. What do you mean by miscellanies and collections? replied he. I mean, resumed I, that he writes in verse and prose, from epic poems and the highest branches of philosophy, down to plays, novels, epigrams, and riddles. In short, he is a lad of universal genius, and most exemplary benevolence; sometimes modestly taking to himself the credit of his own compositions, and sometimes lending out his talents to the literary ambition of those noblemen who write for their own amusement, but wish their names to be concealed, except from a chosen circle. By traffic like this, he sits at the very first tables. But how does he sit at

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his own? said the director; upon what terms does he live with his baker? Not quite so confidentially as with people of fashion, answered I; for, between ourselves, I take him to be quite as much out at elbows as ever Job was. More bonds and judgments against him than ever Job had, take my word for it! replied Ordonnez. Let him lick the spittle of his titled friends and patrons, till his stomach heaves at the nauseating saliva; his printed dedications and his oral flattery, in spite of all the cringing and all the toad-eating which constitute the stock in trade of his profession, with all the profits of his works, whether by subscription or ordinary publication, will not bring grist enough to his mill to keep hunger from the door. Mind if what I say does not turn out to be true! He will come to the dogs at last.

Nothing more likely, replied I; for he cohabits with the muses already, and many a plain man has found to his cost, that there is no keeping company with the sisters without being worried by their bullying brethren. My friend Fabricio would have done much better by remaining quietly with your lordship; he would now have been lying on a bed of roses, and everything he had touched would have turned to gold. He would at least have been in a very snug berth, said Manuel. He was a great favorite of mine; and I meant, by a regular gradation from subaltern to principal situations, to have established him in ease and affluence on the basis of public charity; but the foolish fellow took it into

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his head to set up for a wit. He wrote a play, and brought it out at the theatre in this town: the piece went off tolerably well, and nothing thenceforth would serve his turn but commencing author by profession. Lope de Vega, in his estimation, was but a type of him: preferring, therefore, the intoxicating vapor of public applause to the plain roast and boiled of this substantial ordinary, he came to me for his discharge. It was to no purpose for me to argue the point, or to prove to him what a silly cur he was, to drop the bone and run after the shadow: the mad blockhead was so suffocated by the smother of authorship, that the instinctive dread of fire could not rouse his alacrity to escape burning. In short, he was miserably unconscious of his own interest, as his successor can testify; for he, possessing practical good sense, though without half Fabricio's quickness and versatility, makes it his whole study and delight to go through his business in a workmanlike manner, and to fall in with all my little ways. In return for such good conduct, I pushed him forward in a manner corresponding with his deserts; and he unites in his own person, even at this time of day, two offices in the hospital, the least lucrative of which would be more than sufficient to place any honest man at his ease, though encumbered with a yearly teeming wife.

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CHAPTER II.

GIL BLAS CONTINUES HIS JOURNEY, AND ARRIVES IN SAFETY AT OVIEDO. THE CONDITION OF HIS FAMILY. HIS FATHER'S DEATH, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

FROM Valladolid we got to Oviedo in four days, without any untoward accident on the road, in spite of the proverb which says that robbers lay their ears to the ground when pilgrims are going with rich offerings, and traders are riding with fat purses. It would have been a feasible as well as a tempting speculation. Two tenants of a subterraneous abode might have presented an aspect to have frightened our doubloons into a surrender; for courage was not one of the qualities I had imbibed at court; and Bertrand, my mule-driver, seemed not to be of a temper to get his brains blown out in defending a purse into which he had no free ingress. Scipio was the only one of the party who was anything of a bully.

It was night when we came into town. Our lodgings were at an inn near my uncle, Gil Perez, the canon. I was very desirous of ascertaining the circumstances of my parents before my first interview with them; and, in order to gain that information, it was impossible to make my inquiries in a better channel than through my landlord and landlady, into the lines of whose faces you could not look without being satisfied that they knew every tittle of their neighbors' concerns. As it turned out,

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the landlord kenned me after a diligent perusal of my features, and cried out, By Saint Antony of Padua! this is the son of the honest usher, Blas of Santillane. Ay, indeed! said the hostess; and so it is, without a single muscle altered! just for all the world that same little stripling Gil Blas, of whom we used to say that he was as saucy as he was high. It brings old times to my memory, when he used to come hither with his bottle under his arm, to fetch wine for his uncle's supper.

Madam, said I, you have a most inveterate memory; but for goodness' sake change the subject, and tell me the modern news of my family. My father and mother are doubtless in no very enviable situation. In good truth, you may say that, answered the landlady; you may rack your brains as long as you like, but you will never think of anything half so miserable as what they are suffering at this present moment. Gil Perez, good soul! is defunct all down one side by a stroke of the palsy, and the other half of him is little better than a corpse; we cannot expect him to last long: then your father, who went to live with his reverence a little while ago, is troubled with an inflammation of the lungs, and is standing, as a body may say, quavery-mavery between life and death; while your mother, who is not over and above hale and hearty herself, is obliged to nurse them both.

On this intelligence, which made me feel some compunctious yearnings of nature, I left Bertrand with my stud and baggage at the inn: then, with

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my secretary at my heels, who would not desert me in my time of need, I repaired to my uncle's house. The moment I came within my mother's reach, a natural emotion of maternal instinct unfolded to her who I was, before her eyes could possibly have run over the traces of my countenance. Son, said she, with a melancholy expression, after having embraced me, come and be present at your father's death; your visit is just in time to take in all the piteous circumstances of so deplorable an event. With this heart-rending reception, she led me by the hand into a chamber where the wretched Blas of Santillane, stretched on a comfortless bed, in cold and dismal accord with the thinness of his fortunes, was just entering on the last great act of human nature. Though surrounded by the shades of death, he was not quite unconscious of what was passing about him. My dearest friend, said my mother, here is your son Gil Blas, who entreats your forgiveness for all his undutiful behavior, and is come to ask your blessing before you die. At these tidings my father opened his eyes, which were on the point of closing forever: he fixed them upon me, and reading in my countenance, notwithstanding the awful brink on which he stood, that I was a sincere mourner for his loss, his feelings were recalled to sympathy by my sorrow. He even made an attempt to speak, but his strength was too much exhausted. I took one of his hands in mine, and while I bathed it with my tears, in speechless agony of soul, he breathed his last, as if he had only waited my arrival to pay the

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debt of nature, and wing his way to scenes of untried being.

This event had been too long present to my mother's mind to overwhelm her with any unparalleled affliction. Perhaps it sat more heavily on me than on her, though my father had never in his life given me any reason to feel for him as a father. But besides that mere filial instinct would have made me weep over his cold remains, I reproached myself with not having contributed to the comfort of his latter days; then, when I considered what a hard-hearted villain I had been, I seemed to myself like a monster of ingratitude, or rather like an impious parricide. My uncle, whom I afterwards saw lying at his length on another wretched couch, and in a most lamentable pickle, made me experience fresh agonies of upbraiding conscience. Unnatural son! said I, communing with my own uneasy thoughts, behold the chastisement of heaven upon thy sins in the disconsolate condition of thy nearest relations. Hadst thou but thrown to them the superflux of that abundance in which before thy imprisonment thou rolledst, thou mightest have procured for them those little comforts which thy uncle's ecclesiastical pittance was too scanty to furnish, and perhaps have lengthened out the term of thy father's life.

Gil Perez had fallen into a state of second childhood, and was, though numerically upon the list of the living, in every individual organ a mere corpse. His memory, nay, his very senses had retired from

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their allotted stations in his system. Bootless was it for me to strain him in my pious arms, and lavish outward tokens of affection on him: they might as well have been wasted on the desert air. To as little purpose did my mother ring in his unnerved ear, that I was his nephew Gil Blas; he gazed at me with a vacant, stupid stare, and gave neither sign nor answer. Had the ties of consanguinity and gratitude been all too weak to awaken my tender sympathy for an uncle to whom I owed the means of my first launch into the world, the impression of helpless dotage on my senses must have softened me into something like the counterfeit of virtuous emotion.

While this scene was passing, Scipio preserved a melancholy silence, sharing in all my sorrows, and mingling his sighs with mine in the chastised luxury of friendship. But concluding that my mother, after so long an absence, might wish to have some such conversation with me as the presence of a stranger must rather repress than promote, I drew him aside, saying, Go, my good fellow, sit down quietly at the inn, and leave me here with my only surviving parent, who might consider your company as an intrusion, while talking over family affairs. Scipio withdrew, for fear of being a clog upon our confidence, and I sat down with my mother to an interchange of communication which lasted all night. We reciprocally gave a faithful account of all that had happened to each of us since my first sally from Oviedo. She related in full measure and running

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over all the petty insults, disappointments, and mortifications which she had undergone in her pilgrimage from house to house as a duenna. A great number of these little anecdotes it would have hurt my pride that my secretary should have noted down in his biographical budget, though I had never concealed from him the ups and downs in the lottery of my own life. With all the respect I owe to my mother's sainted memory, the good lady had not the knack of going the shortest road to the end of a story; had she but pruned her own memoirs of all luxuriant circumstances, there would not have been materials for more than a tithe of her narrative.

At length she got to the end of her tether, and I began my career. With respect to my general adventures, I passed them over lightly; but when I came to speak of the visit which the son of Bertrand Muscada, the grocer of Oviedo, had paid me at Madrid, I enlarged with decent compunction on that dark article in the history of my life. I must frankly own, said I to my mother, that I gave that young fellow a very bad reception; and he, doubtless, in revenge, must have drawn a hideous outline of my moral features. He did you more than justice, I trust, answered she; for he told us that he found you so puffed and swollen with the good fortune thrust upon you by the prime minister, as scarcely to acknowledge him among your former acquaintance; and, when he gave you a moving description of our miseries, you listened as if you had no interest in the tale, or knowledge of the parties. But as fathers

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and mothers can always find some clew for palliation in the conduct of their graceless children, we were loath to believe that you had so bad a heart. Your arrival at Oviedo justifies our favorable interpretation, and those tears which are now flowing down your cheeks are so many pledges either of your innocence or your reformation.

Your constructions were too partial, replied I; there was a great deal of truth in young Muscada's report. When he came to see me, all my faculties were engrossed by vanity and mammon; ambition, the prevailing devil which possessed me, left not a thought to throw away on the desolate condition of my parents. It, therefore, could be no wonder if in such a disposition of mind I gave rather a freezing reception to a man, who, accosting me in a peremptory style, took upon him to say, without mincing the matter, that it was well known I was as rich as a Jew, and therefore he advised me to send you a good round sum, seeing that you were very much put to your shifts: nay, he went so far as to reproach me, in phrase of more sincerity than good manners, with my unfeeling negligence of my family. His confounded personality stuck in my throat; so that, losing my little stock of patience, I shoved him fairly by the shoulders out of my closet. It must be confessed that I took the administration of justice a little too much into my own hands, being judge and party in the same cause; neither was it proper that you should bear the brunt, because the grocer was a little anti-saccharine in his phraseology; nor was his

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advice the less pertinent or just, though couched in homely terms, or urged with plodding vulgarity.

All this came plump in the teeth of my conscience the moment I had turned Muscada out of doors. The voice of natural instinct contrived to make its way; my duty to my parents brought the blood into my face; but it was the blush of shame for its neglect, and not the glow of triumph at its performance. Yet even my remorse can give me little credit in your eyes, since it was soon stifled in the fumes of avarice and ambition. But some time afterwards, having been safely lodged in the tower of Segovia by royal mandate, I fell dangerously ill there; and that timely remembrancer was the cause of bringing back your son to you. So true is it that sickness and imprisonment were my best moral tutors; for they enabled nature to resume her rights, and weaned me effectually from the court. Henceforth, all my dear delight is in solitude; and my only business in the Asturias is to entreat that you would share with me in the mild pleasures of a retired life. If you reject not my earnest petition, I will attend you to an estate of mine in the kingdom of Valencia, and we will live there together very comfortably. You are, of course, aware that I intended to take my father thither also; but since heaven has ordained it otherwise, let me at least have the satisfaction of affording an asylum to my mother, and making amends by all the attentions in my power for the fallow seasons in the former harvest of my filial duty.

I accept your kind intentions in very good part,

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said my mother, and would take the journey without hesitation if I saw no obstacles in the way. But to desert your uncle in his present condition would be unpardonable; and I am too much accustomed to this part of the country to like living elsewhere: nevertheless, as the proposal deserves to be maturely weighed, I will consider further of it at my leisure. At present your father's funeral requires to be ordered and arranged. As for that, said I, we will leave it to the care of the young man whom you saw with me; he is my secretary, with as clever a head and as good a heart as you have often been acquainted with; let the business rest with him; it cannot be in better hands.

Hardly had I pronounced these words when Scipio came back; for it was already broad day. He inquired whether he could be of any service in our present distresses. I answered that he was come just in time to receive some very important directions. As soon as he was made acquainted with the business in hand, A word to the wise, said he: the whole procession, with its appropriate heraldry, is already marshalled in this head of mine; you may trust me for a very pretty funeral. Have a care, said my mother, to make it plain and decent, without anything like pomp or parade. It can scarcely be too humble for my husband, whom all the town knows to have been low in rank and indigent in circumstances. Madam, replied Scipio, though he had been the meanest and most destitute of the human race, I would not bate one button in the array of his post-

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humous honors. My master's credit is at stake in the proper conduct of the ceremony; he has been in an ostensible situation under the Duke of Lerma, and his father ought to be buried with all the forms of state and nobility.

I thought exactly as my secretary did upon the subject, and even went so far as to bid him spare no expense on the occasion. A little leaven of vanity still fermented in the mass of my philosophy, and rose in my bosom with all the effervescence of its original lightness. I flattered myself that by lavishing posthumous honors on a father who had blessed the day of his decease by no lucrative bequest, I should instil into the conceptions of the bystanders a high sense of my generous nature. My mother, on her part, whatever airs of humility she might put on, had no dislike to seeing her husband carried out with due observance of funeral pomp and ceremony. We therefore left Scipio to do just as he pleased; and he, without a moment's delay, adopted all the necessary measures for the display of the undertaker's liveliest fancy.

The genius of that artist was called forth but too successfully. His emblems, devices, and draperies were so ostentatious as to disgust instead of cajoling the natives: every individual, whether of the town or the suburbs, whether high or low, rich or poor, felt shocked and insulted by this after-thought parade. This ministerial beggar on horseback, said one, can put his hand into his pocket for his father's funeral baked meats, but never found in his heart where-

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withal to furnish his living table with common necessaries. It would have been much more to the purpose, said another, to have made the old gentleman's latter days comfortable, than to have wasted such thriftless sums on a post-obit act of filial munificence. In short, quips of the brain and peltings of the tongue pattered round our execrated heads. It would have been well had the storm been only a whirlwind of passion, or hurricane of words; but we were all, Scipio, Bertrand, and myself, corporally admonished of our misdeeds on our coming out of church; they abused us like pickpockets, made mouths and odious noises as we passed, and followed Bertrand at his heels to the inn with a copious volley of stones and mud. To disperse the mob which had collected before my uncle's house, my mother was obliged to show herself at the window, and to declare publicly that she was thoroughly satisfied with my proceedings. Another detachment had filed off to the stable-yard where my carriage stood, in the full determination of breaking it to pieces; and this they would inevitably have done, if the landlord and landlady had not found some means of quieting their perturbed spirits, and turning them aside from their outrageous purpose.

All these affronts, so revolting to my dignity, the effect of the tales which the young grocer had been spreading about town, inspired me with such a thorough hatred for my native place, that I determined on quitting Oviedo almost immediately, though but for this bustle I might have made it my residence for

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some time. I announced my intention, with the reasons of it, to my mother, who, considering my uncouth reception as no very flattering compliment to herself, did not urge my longer stay among people so little inclined to treat me civilly. The only point remaining now to be discussed was her future destiny and provision. My dear mother, said I, since my uncle stands so much in need of your attendance, I will no longer urge you to go along with me; but, as his days seem likely to be very few on earth, you must promise to come and take up your abode with me at my farm as soon as the last duties are performed to his honored remains.

I shall make no such promise, answered my mother, for I mean to pass the remnant of my days in the Asturias, and in a state of perfect independence. Will you not on all occasions, replied I, be absolute mistress in my household? May be so, and may be not, rejoined she: you have only to fall in love with some flirt of a girl, and then you will marry: then she will be my daughter-in-law, and I shall be her step-mother; and then we shall live together as step-mothers and daughters-in-law usually do. Your prognostics, said I, are fetched from a great distance. I have not at present the most remote intention of entering into the happy state; but even though such a whim should take possession of my brain, I will pledge myself for instructing my wife betimes in an implicit submission to your will and pleasure. That is giving security without the means of making good your contract, replied my

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mother; you would scarcely be able to justify bail. I would not even swear that, in our sparring-matches, you might not take your wife's part in preference to mine, however ill she might behave, or however unreasonably she might argue.

You talk very excellent sense, madam, cried my secretary, coming in for his share of the conversation; I think just as you do, that docility is about as much the virtue of a donkey as of a daughter-in-law. As the matter stands, that there may be no difference of opinion between my master and you, since you are absolutely determined to live asunder, you in the Asturias, and he in the kingdom of Valencia, he must allow you an annuity of a hundred pistoles, and send me hither every year for the payment. By thus arranging matters, mother and son will be very good friends, with an interval of two hundred leagues between them. The parties concerned fell in at once with the proposal: I paid the first year in advance, and stole out of Oviedo the next morning before dawn, for fear of vying with Saint Stephen in popular favor. Such were the charms of my return to my native place. An admirable lesson this, for those successful upstarts, who, having gone abroad to make their fortunes, come home to be the purse-proud tyrants of their birthplace.

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CHAPTER III.

GIL BLAS SETS OUT FOR VALENCIA, AND ARRIVES AT LIRIAS; DESCRIPTION OF HIS SEAT; THE PARTICULARS OF HIS RECEPTION, AND THE CHARACTERS OF THE INHABITANTS HE FOUND THERE.

We took the road for Leon, afterwards that of Valencia; and, continuing our journey by short stages, arrived on the evening of the tenth day at the town of Segorba, whence early on the morrow we repaired to my seat, at the distance of very little more than three leagues. In proportion as we approached nearer, it was amusing to see with what a longing eye my secretary looked at all the estates which lay in our way, to the right and left of the road. Whenever he caught a glimpse of any which bespoke the rank and opulence of its owner, he never missed pointing at it with his finger, and wishing that were the place of our retreat.

I know not, my good friend, said I, what ideas you have formed of our habitation; but if you have taken it into your head that ours is a magnificent house, with the domain of a great landed proprietor, I warn you in time that you are laying much too flattering an unction to your vanity.

If you have no mind to be the dupe of a warm imagination, figure to yourself the little ornamented cottage which Horace fitted up near Tibur, in the country of the Sabines, on a small farm, the fee-simple of which was given him by Mæcenas. Don

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Alphonso has made me just such another present, more as a token of affection than for the value of the thing. Then I must expect to see nothing but a dirty hovel! exclaimed Scipio. Bear in mind, replied I, that I have always given you quite an unvarnished description of my place; and now, even at this moment, you may judge for yourself whether I have not stuck to truth and nature in my representations. Just carry your eye along the course of the Guadalaviar, and observe at a little distance from the further bank, near that hamlet, consisting of nine or ten tenements, a house with four small turrets: that is my mansion.

The deuce and all! stammered out my secretary, short-breathed with sudden admiration: why, that house is one of the prettiest things in nature. Besides the castellated air which those turrets give it, all the beauties of situation and architecture, fertility of soil, and perfection of landscape, combine to rival or excel the immediate neighborhood of Seville, complimented as it is for its picturesque attractions by the appellation of an earthly paradise. Had we chosen the place of our settlement for ourselves, it could not have been more to my taste: a river meanders through the grounds, distilling plenty and verdure from its fertilizing bosom; the leafy honors of an umbrageous wood invite the mid-day walk, and qualify the temperature of the seasons. What a heavenly abode of solitude and contemplation! Ah! my dear master, we shall act very foolishly if we are in a hurry to run away from our

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happiness. I am delighted, answered I, that you are so well satisfied with the retreat provided for us, though yet acquainted with only a small part of its attractions.

As we were chatting in this strain, we got nearer and nearer to the house, where the door opened as by magic, the moment Scipio announced Signor Gil Blas de Santillane, who was coming to take possession of his estate. At the mention of this name, received with reverential homage by the people who had been instructed in the transfer of their obedience, my carriage was admitted into a large court, where I alighted; then, leaning with all my weight upon Scipio, as if walking was a derogation from my dignity, and putting on the great man after the most consequential models, I reached the hall, where, on my entrance, seven or eight servants made their obeisances. They told me they were come to welcome their new master with their best loves and duties; that Don Cæsar and Don Alphonso de Leyva had chosen them to form my establishment, one in quality of cook, another as under-cook, a third as scullion, a fourth as porter, and the rest as footmen; with an express injunction to receive no wages or perquisites, as those two noblemen meant to defray all the expenses of my household. The cook, Master Joachim by name, was commander-in-chief of this battalion, and announced to me the whole array of the campaign; he declared that he had laid in a large stock of the choicest wines in Spain, and insinuated that for the solid supply of the table, he

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flattered himself a person of his education and experience, who had been six years at the head of my Lord Archbishop of Valencia's kitchen, must know how to dish up a dinner so as to meet the ideas of the most fastidious layman in Christendom. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating, added he; so I will just go and give you a specimen of my talent. You had better take a walk, my lord, while dinner is getting ready; look about the premises, and see whether you find them in tenantable condition for a person of your lordship's dignity.

The reader may guess whether I did not stir my stumps; and Scipio, still more eager than myself to take a bird's-eye inventory of our goods and chattels, dragged me back and fore from room to room. There was not a corner of the house that we did not peep into, from the garret to the cellar; not a closet or a cranny, at least as we supposed, could escape our prying curiosity; and in every fresh room we went into, I had occasion to admire the kindness of Don Cæsar and his son towards me. I was struck, among other things, with two apartments, which were as elegantly furnished as they could be, without misplaced magnificence. One of them was hung with tapestry, the celebrated manufacture of the Low Countries; the velvet bed and chairs were still very handsome, though in the fashion of the time when the Moors possessed the kingdom of Valencia. The furniture of the other room was in the same taste: to wit, an old suit of hangings, made of yellow Genoa damask, with a bed and arm-chairs to match,

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fringed with blue silk. All these effects, which would have furnished but a sorry display in an upholsterer's shop, made no contemptible appearance in their present situation.

After having rummaged over every article of the paraphernalia, my secretary and myself returned to the dining-room, where the cloth was laid for two; we sat down, and in an instant they served up so delicious an olla podrida, that we could not help revolving on the various turns of the fate below, which had parted the good Archbishop of Valencia from his cook. We had in truth a most catholic and ravenous appetite—a circumstance which added new zest to our praises and enjoyments. Between every succeeding help, my servants, with all the alacrity of fresh and holiday service, filled our large glasses to the brim with wine, the choicest vintage of La Mancha. Scipio, not thinking it genteel to express aloud the inward chucklings of his heart at our dainty fare, winked and nodded his delight, and spoke by signs, which I returned with the like dumb eloquence of overflowing satisfaction. The remove was a dish of roast quails, flanking a little leveret in high order, just kept long enough; for this we left our hash, good as it was, and gorged ourselves to a surfeit on the game. When we had eaten as if we had never eaten before, and pledged one another in due proportion, we rose from table, and went into the garden to look out for some cool, pleasant spot, and take our afternoon's nap voluptuously.

If hitherto my secretary had goggled satisfaction

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at what he had seen, he stared wider and grinned broader at this vista vision of the garden. He scarcely allowed the comparison to be in favor of the Escurial. The reason of its extreme niceness was, that Don Cæsar, who came backwards and forwards to Lirias, took pleasure in improving and ornamenting it. All the walks well gravelled and lined with orange trees, a large reservoir of white marble, with a lion in bronze spouting water like a dolphin's deputy in the middle, the beauty of the flower borders, the profusion and variety of the fruit trees,—such pretty particulars as these made Scipio smack his lips, and snuff the air; but his raptures reached their summit at the gradual descent of a long walk, leading to the bailiff's cottage, and overarched by the interwoven boughs of the trees planted on each side. While eulogizing a place so well adapted for a refuge from the intenseness of the heat, we made a halt, and sat down at the foot of an elm, where sleep required very little cunning to entangle two high-fed, half-tipsy blades, just risen from so voluptuous and voracious a repast.

In about two hours we were startled out of our sleep by the report of musketry, popping so near the head-quarters of our repose, that we apprehended the camp to be attacked. On the alert! was the first idea that invaded our dozing minds. That we might procure the most authentic intelligence in what direction the enemy was approaching, we directed our march towards the bailiff's tenement. There were collected eight or ten clodhoppers, all

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friends and neighbors, assembled on the green for the purpose of honoring my arrival, just communicated to the vacant senses of the said clodhoppers by a discharge of fire-arms, whose barrels and furniture might thank me for the unusual favor of a thorough cleaning. The greater part of them were acquainted with my person, having seen me more than once at the castle, while engaged in the business of my stewardship. No sooner did they set eyes on me, than they all shouted in unison, Long life to our new lord and master! Welcome to Lirias! Then they loaded once again, and fired another volley in honor of the occasion. My habits and manners were softened down to the most condescending urbanity, though with a decorous infusion of distance, lest any degrading constructions might be put upon too unlimited a freedom of address. With respect to my protection, I promised it according to the customary charter of newly-installed possessors, and went so far as to throw them a purse of twenty pistoles: and this, in my opinion, was the point of all others in my conduct which touched their hearts most nearly. After this benefaction, I left them at liberty to waste as much powder as they pleased, and withdrew with my secretary into the wood, where we walked to and fro till nightfall, without being at all tired of our rural prospect; so many charms had the view of a landscape, heightened by the substantial beauties of ownership in fee-simple, to our elevated and delighted imaginations!

The cook, the under-cook, and the scullion were

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not resting upon their oars all this time; they were working hard to fit up for us an artifice of belly timber more magnificent than what we had already demolished, so that we were over head and ears in amazement, when, on our return to the room where we had dined, we saw on the table a dish of four roast partridges, with a smothered rabbit on one side, and a fricasseed capon on the other. The second course consisted of pigs' ears, jugged game, and chocolate cream. We drank deeply of the most delicious wines, and began to think of going to bed when it became a matter of doubt whether we could sit up any longer. Then my people, with lighted candles before me, led the way to the best bedroom, where they were all most officious in assisting to undress me; but when they had tendered me my gown and nightcap, I dismissed them with an authoritative undulation of my hand, signifying that their services were dispensed with for the remainder of that night.

Thus I sent them all about their business, keeping Scipio for a little private conference between ourselves; and I led to it by asking him what he thought of my reception, as arranged by order of my noble patrons. Indeed and indeed, answered he, the human heart could not devise anything more delicious; I only wish we may go on as we have begun. I have no wish of the kind, replied I: it is contrary to my principles to allow that my benefactors should put themselves to so much expense on my account; it would be a downright fraud upon their benevolence.

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Besides, I could never feel myself at home with servants in the pay of other people; it is just like living in a lodging or an inn. Then it is to be remembered, that I did not come hither to live upon so expensive a scale. What occasion have we for so large an establishment of servants? Our utmost want, with Bertrand, is a cook, a scullion, and a footman. Though my secretary would not have been at all sorry to table for a continuance at the governor of Valencia's expense, he did not oppose his own luxurious taste to my moral delicacy, but conformed at once to my sentiments, and approved the reduction I was meditating to introduce. That point being decided, he left my chamber, and betook himself to his pillow in his own.

CHAPTER IV.

A JOURNEY TO VALENCIA, AND A VISIT TO THE LORDS OF LEYVA. THE CONVERSATION OF THE GENTLEMEN, AND SERAPHINA'S DEMEANOR.

I GOT my clothes off as soon as possible, and went to bed, where, finding no great inclination to sleep, I communed with my own thoughts. The mutual attachment between the lords of Leyva and myself was uppermost in the various topics of my contemplation. With my heart full of their late kindness, I determined on setting out for their residence the next day, and quenching my impatience to thank

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them for their favors. Neither was it a slender gratification to anticipate another interview with Seraphina; though there was somewhat of alloy in that pleasure: it was impossible to reflect without shuddering, that I should at the same time have to encounter the glances of Dame Lorenza Sephora, who might not be greatly delighted at the renewal of our acquaintance, should her memory happen to stumble upon the circumstances connected with a certain box on the ear. With my mind exhausted by all these different suggestions, my eyelids at length closed, and the sun had peeped in at my window long before they turned upon their hinges.

I was soon out of bed, and dressed myself with all possible expedition, in the earnest desire of prosecuting my intended journey. Just as I had finished my hasty operations, my secretary came into the room. Scipio, said I, you behold a man on the point of setting out for Valencia. I ought to lose no time in paying my respects to those noblemen to whom I am indebted for my little independence. Every moment of delay in the performance of this duty throws a new weight of ingratitude on my conscience. As for you, my friend, there is no necessity for your attendance; stay here during my absence; I shall come back to you within the space of a week. Heaven speed you, sir! answered he: be sure you do not slight Don Alphonso and his father: they seem to me to thrill with the kindly vibrations of friendship, and to be unbounded in their acknowledgment of obligation: gratitude and benev-

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olence are so uncommon in people of rank, that they deserve to be made the most of where found. I sent a message to Bertrand, to hold himself in readiness for setting out, and took my chocolate while he was harnessing the mules. When all was prepared, I got into my carriage, after having directed my people to consider my secretary as master of the house in my absence, and to obey his orders as if they were my own.

I got to Valencia in less than four hours, and drove at once to the governor's stables, where I alighted and left my equipage. On going to the house, I was informed that Don Cæsar and his son were together. I did not wait for an introduction, but went in without ceremony; and addressing myself to both of them, Servants, said I, never send in their names to their masters: here is an old piece of family furniture, not ornamental indeed, but of a fashion when gratitude was neither out of date nor out of countenance. These words were accompanied with an effort to throw myself on my knees; but they anticipated my purpose, and embraced me one after the other with all possible evidence of sincere affection. Well, then, my dear Santillane, said Don Alphonso, you have been at Lirias to take possession of your little property. Yes, my lord, answered I; and my next request is, that you would be pleased to take it back again. What is your reason for that? replied he. Is there anything about it at all offensive to your taste? Not in the place itself, rejoined I: on the contrary, that is everything that my

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heart can wish; the only fault I have to find with it is that the kitchen smells too strongly of the hierarchy; a lay Christian should not live like an archbishop; besides that, there are three times as many servants as are necessary, and consequently you are put to an expense at once enormous and useless.

Had you accepted the annuity of two thousand ducats, which we offered you at Madrid, said Don Cæsar, we should have thought it enough to give you the mansion furnished as it is; but you know you refused it; and we felt it but right to do what we have done as an equivalent. Your bounty has been too lavish, answered I: the gift of the estate was the utmost limit to which it should have been extended, and that was more than sufficient to crown my largest wishes. But to say nothing about what it has cost you to keep up so great and expensive an establishment, I declare to you most solemnly that these people stand in my way, and are a great annoyance. In one word, gentlemen, either take back your boon, or give me leave to enjoy it in my own way. I pronounced these last words so much as if I was in earnest, that the father and son, not meaning to lay me under any unpleasant restraint, at length gave me their permission to manage my household as it should seem expedient to my better judgment.

I was thanking them very kindly for having granted me that privilege, without which a dukedom would have been but splendid slavery, when Don Alphonso interrupted me by saying, My dear Gil Blas, I will

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introduce you to a lady who will be extremely happy to see you. Thus preparing me for the interview, he took me by the hand and led the way to Seraphina's apartment, who set up a scream of joy on recognizing me. Madam, said the governor, I flatter myself that the visit of our friend Santillane at Valencia is not less acceptable to you than myself. On that head, answered she, he may rest confidently assured; time has not obliterated the remembrance of the service which he once rendered me; and to that must be added a new debt of gratitude incurred on the score of your obligations. I told the governor's lady that I was already too well requited for the danger which I had shared in common with her deliverers in exposing my life for her sake: compliments to the like effect were bandied about for some time on both sides, when Don Alphonso motioned to quit Seraphina's room. We then went back to Don Cæsar, whom we found in the saloon with a fashionable party, who were come to dinner.

All these gentlemen were introduced, and paid their compliments to me in the politest manner; nor did their attentions relax in assiduity, when Don Cæsar told them that I had been one of the Duke of Lerma's principal secretaries. In all likelihood several of them might not be unacquainted that Don Alphonso had been promoted to the government of Valencia by my interest, for political secrets are seldom kept. However that might be, while we were at table, the conversation principally turned on the new cardinal. Some of the company either were,

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or affected to be, his unqualified admirers, while others allowed his merit upon the whole, but thought it had been rather overrated. I plainly saw through their design of drawing me on to enlarge on the subject of his eminence, and to gratify their taste for scandal with court anecdotes at his expense. I could have been well enough pleased to have delivered my real sentiments on his character, but I kept my tongue within my teeth, and thereby passed, in the estimation of the guests, for a close, confidential, politic, trustworthy young statesman.

The party respectively retired home after dinner to take their usual nap, when Don Cæsar and his son, yielding to a similar inclination, shut themselves up in their apartments.

For my own part, full of impatience to see a town which I had so often heard extolled for its beauty, I went out of the governor's palace with the intention of walking through the streets. At the gate a man accosted me with the following address: Will Signor de Santillane allow me to take the liberty of paying my respects to him? I asked him who and what he was. I am Don Cæsar's valet-de-chambre, answered he, but was one of his ordinary footmen during your stewardship; I used to make my court to you every morning, and you used to take a great deal of notice of me. I regularly gave you intelligence of what was passing in the house. Do you recollect my apprising you one day that the village surgeon of Leyva was privately admitted into Dame Lorenza Sephora's bedchamber? It is a circumstance which I have by

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no means forgotten, replied I. But now that we are talking of that formidable duenna, what is become of her? Alas! resumed he, the poor creature moped and dwindled after your departure, and at length gave up the ghost, more to the grief of Seraphina than of Don Alphonso, who seemed to consider her death as no great evil.

Don Cæsar's valet-de-chambre, having thus acquainted me with Sephora's melancholy end, made a humble apology for having presumed to stop my walk, and then left me to continue my progress. I could not help paying the tribute of a sigh to the memory of that ill-fated duenna; and her decease affected me the more because I taxed myself with that melancholy catastrophe, though a moment's reflection would have convinced me that the grave owed its precious prey to the inroads of her cancer, rather than to the cruel charms of my person.

I looked with an eye of pleasure upon everything worth notice in the town. The archbishop's marble palace feasted my eyes with all the magnificence of architecture; nor were the piazzas which surrounded the exchange much inferior in commercial grandeur; but a large building at a distance, with a great crowd standing before the doors, attracted all my attention. I went nearer, to ascertain the reason why so great a concourse of both sexes was collected, and was soon let into the secret by reading the following inscription in letters of gold on a tablet of black marble over the door: *La Posada de los Representantes.** The

* The theatre.

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play-bills announced for that day a new tragedy, never performed, and gave the name of Don Gabriel Triaquero as the author.

CHAPTER V.

GIL BLAS GOES TO THE PLAY, AND SEES A NEW TRAGEDY. THE SUCCESS OF THE PIECE. THE PUBLIC TASTE AT VALENCIA.

I STOPPED for some minutes before the door, to make my remarks on the people who were going in. There were some of all sorts and sizes. Here was a knot of genteel-looking fellows, whose tailors at least had done justice to their fashionable pretensions; there, a mob of ill-favored and ill-mannered mortals, in a garb to identify vulgarity. To the right was a bevy of noble ladies, alighted from their carriages to take possession of their private boxes; to the left, a tribe of female traders in lubricity, who came to sell their wares in the lobby. This mixed concourse of spectators, as various in their minds as in their faces, gave me an itching inclination to increase their number. Just as I was taking my check, the governor and his lady drove up. They spied me out in the crowd, and having sent for me, took me with them to their box, where I placed myself behind them, in such a position as to converse at my ease with either.

The theatre was filled with spectators from the

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ceiling downwards, the pit thronged almost to suffocation, and the stage crowded with knights of the three military orders. Here is a full house, said I to Don Alphonso. You are not to consider that as anything extraordinary, answered he; the tragedy now about to be produced is from the pen of Don Gabriel Triaquero, the most fashionable dramatic writer of his day. Whenever the play-bill announces any novelty from this favorite author, the whole town of Valencia is in a bustle. The men as well as the women talk incessantly on the subject of the piece: all the boxes are taken; and on the first night of performance there is a risk of broken limbs in getting in, though the price of admission is doubled, with the exception of the pit, which is too authoritative a part of the house for the proprietors to tamper with its patience. What a paroxysm of partiality! said I to the governor. This eager curiosity of the public, this hot-headed impatience to be present at the first representation of Don Gabriel's pieces gives me a magnificent idea of that poet's genius.

At this period of our conversation the curtain rose. We immediately left off talking, to fix our whole attention on the stage. The applauses were rapturous even at the prologue: as the performance advanced, every sentiment and situation, nay, almost every line of the piece, called forth a burst of acclamation; and at the end of each act the clapping of hands was so loud and incessant, as almost to bring the building about our ears. After the dropping of the curtain, the author was pointed out to me, going

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about from box to box, and with all the modesty of a successful poet, submitting his head to the imposition of those laurels which the genteeler, and especially the fairer part of the audience had prepared for his coronation.

We returned to the governor's palace, where we were met by a party of three or four gentlemen. Besides these mere amateurs, there were two veteran authors of considerable eminence in their line, and a gentleman of Madrid with tolerably fair claims to critical authority and judgment. They had all been at the play. The new piece was the only topic of conversation during supper-time. Gentlemen, said a knight of St. James, what do you think of this tragedy? Has it not every claim to the character of a finished work? Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn, a hand to touch the true chords of pity, and sweep the lyre of poetry—requisites how rarely, and yet how admirably united! In a word, it is the performance of a person mixing in the higher circles of society. There can be no possible difference of opinion on that subject, said a knight of Alcantara. The piece is full of strokes which Apollo himself might have aimed, and of perplexities contrived so that none but the author himself could have unravelled them. I appeal to that acute and ingenious stranger, added he, addressing his discourse to the Castilian gentleman; he looks to me like a good judge, and I will lay a wager that he is on my side of the question. Take care how you stake on an uncertainty, my worthy knight, answered the

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gentleman with a sarcastic smile. I am not of your provincial school; we do not pass our judgment so hastily at Madrid. Far from sentencing a piece on its first representation, we are jealous of its apparent merit while aided by scenic deception; our fancies and our feelings may be carried away for the moment, but our serious decision is suspended till we have read the work; and the most common result of its appeal to the press is a defalcation from its powers of pleasing on the stage.

Thus you perceive, pursued he, that it is our practice to examine a work of genius closely before we stamp on it the mark of a stock piece: its author's fame, let it ring as loudly as it may, can never confound our exactness of discrimination. When Lope de Vega himself or Calderona ventured on the boards, they encountered rigid critics, though in an audience which doted on them—critics who would not sign their passport to the regions of immortality till they had sifted their claims to be admitted there.

That is a little too much, interrupted the knight of St. James. We are not quite so cautious as you. It is not our custom to wait for the printing of a piece in order to decide on its reputation. By the very first performance it sinks or swims. It does not even seem necessary to be inconveniently attentive to the business of the stage. It is sufficient that we know it for a production of Don Gabriel, to be persuaded that it combines every excellence. The works of that poet may justly be considered as commencing

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a new era, and fixing the criterion of good taste. The school of Lope and Calderona was the mere cart of Thespis, compared with the polished scenes of this great dramatic master. The gentleman, who looked up to Lope and Calderona as the Sophocles and Euripides of the Spaniards, could not easily be brought to acknowledge such wild canons of criticism. This is dramatic heresy with a vengeance! exclaimed he. Since you compel me, gentlemen, to decide like you on the fallacious evidence of a first night, I must tell you that I am not at all satisfied with this new tragedy of your Don Gabriel. As a poem, it abounds more with glittering conceits than with passages of pathos or delineations of nature. The verses, three out of four, are defective either in measure or rhyme; the characters, clumsily imagined or incongruously supported; and the thoughts have often the obscurity of a riddle without its ingenuity.

The two authors at table, who, with a prudence equally commendable and unusual, had said nothing for fear of lying under the imputation of jealousy, could not help assenting to the last speaker's opinions by their looks; which warranted me in concluding that their silence was less owing to the perfection of the work, than to the dictates of personal policy. As for the military critics, they got to their old topic of ringing the changes on Don Gabriel, and exalted him to a level with the under tenants of Olympus. This extravagant association with the demigods, this blind and stiff-necked idolatry, divorced the Castilian from his little stock of patience, so that, raising his

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hands to heaven, he broke out abruptly into a volley of enthusiasm: O divine Lope de Vega, sublime and unrivalled genius, who hast left an immeasurable space between thee and all the Gabriels who would light their tapers from thy bright effulgence! and thou, mellow, soft-voiced Calderona, whose elegance and sweetness, rejecting buskined rant and tragic swell, reign with undisputed sway over the affections, fear not, either of you, lest your altars should be overturned by this tongue-tied nursling of the muses! It will be the utmost of his renown, if posterity, before whose eyes your works shall live in daily view, and form their dear delight, shall enroll his name, as matter of history and curious record, on the list of obsolete authors.

This animated apostrophe, for which the company was not at all prepared, raised a hearty laugh, after which we all rose from table and withdrew. An apartment had been got ready for me by Don Alphonso's order, where I found a good bed; and my lordship, lying down in luxurious weariness, went to sleep upon the tag of the Castilian gentleman's impassioned vindication, and dreamed most crustily of the injustice done to Lope and Calderona by ignorant pretenders.

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CHAPTER VI.

GIL BLAS, WALKING ABOUT THE STREETS OF VALENCIA, MEETS WITH A MAN OF SANCTITY, WHOSE PIOUS FACE HE HAS SEEN SOMEWHERE ELSE. WHAT SORT OF MAN THIS MAN OF SANCTITY TURNS OUT TO BE.

As I had not been able to complete my view of the city on the preceding day, I got up betimes in the morning with the intention of taking another walk. In the street I remarked a Carthusian friar, who doubtless was thus early in motion to promote the interests of his order. He walked with his eyes fixed on the ground, and a gait so holy and contemplative as to inspire every passenger with religious awe. His path was in the same direction as mine. I looked at him with more than ordinary curiosity, and could not help fancying it was Don Raphael, that man of shifts and expedients, who has already secured so honorable a niche in the temple of fame. (*See Books I. to VI. of my Memoirs.*)

I was so utterly astonished, so thrown off my balance by this meeting, that, instead of accosting the monk, I remained motionless for some seconds, which gave him time to get the start of me. Just heaven! said I, were there ever two faces more exactly alike? I do not know what to make of it! It seems incredible that Raphael should turn up in such a guise! And yet how is it possible to be any one else? I felt too great a curiosity to get at the truth not to pursue the inquiry. Having ascertained the

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way to the monastery of the Carthusians, I repaired thither immediately, in the hope of coming across the object of my search on his return, and with the full intent of stopping and parleying with him. But it was quite unnecessary to wait for his arrival, to enlighten my mind on the subject; on reaching the convent gate, another physiognomy, such as few persons had read without paying for their lesson, resolved all my doubts into certainty; for the friar who served in the capacity of porter was unquestionably my old and godly-visaged servant, Ambrose de Lamela.

Our surprise was equal on both sides at meeting again in such a place. Is not this a play upon the senses? said I, paying my compliments to him. Is it actually one of my friends who presents himself to my astonished sight? He did not know me again at first, or probably might pretend not to do so; but, reflecting within himself that it was in vain to deny his own identity, he assumed the start of a man who all at once hits upon a circumstance which had hitherto escaped his recollection. Ah, Signor Gil Blas, exclaimed he, excuse my not recognizing your person immediately. Since I have lived in this holy place, every faculty of my soul has been absorbed in the performance of the duties prescribed by our rules, so that by degrees I lose the remembrance of all worldly objects and events.

After a separation of ten years, said I, it gives me much pleasure to find you again in so venerable a garb. For my part, answered he, it fills me with

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shame and confusion to appear in it before a man who has been an eye-witness of my guilty courses. These ghostly weeds are at once the charm of my present life, and the condemnation of my former. Alas! added he, heaving a righteous sigh, to be worthy of wearing it, my earlier years should have been passed in primitive innocence. By this discourse, so rational and edifying, replied I, it is plain, my dear brother, that the finger of the Lord has been upon you, that you are marked out for a vessel of sanctification. I tell you once again, I am delighted at it, and would give the world to know in what miraculous manner you and Raphael were led into the path of the righteous; for I am persuaded that it was his own self whom I met in the town, habited as a Carthusian. I was extremely sorry, afterwards, not to have stopped and spoken to him in the street, and I am waiting here to apologize for my neglect on his return.

You were not mistaken, said Lamela; it was Don Raphael himself whom you saw; and as for the particulars of our conversion, they are as follow: After parting with you near Segorba, we struck into the Valencia road, with the design of bettering our trade by some new speculation. Chance or destiny one day led our steps into the church of the Carthusians, while service was performing in the choir. The demeanor of the brethren attracted our notice, and we experienced in our own persons the involuntary homage which vice pays to virtue. We admired the fervor with which they poured forth their devo-

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tions, their looks of pious mortification, their deadness to the pleasures of the world and the flesh, and in the settled composure of their countenances, the outward sign of an approving conscience within.

While making these observations, we fell into a train of thought which became like manna to the hungry and thirsty soul: we compared our habits of life with the employments of these holy men, and the wide difference between our spiritual conditions filled us with confusion and affright. Lamela, said Don Raphael, as we went out of church, how do you stand affected by what we have just seen? For my part, there is no disguising the truth; my mind is ill at ease. Emotions new and indescribable are rushing upon my mind; and, for the first time in my life, I reproach myself with the wickedness of my past actions. I am just in the same temper of soul, answered I; my iniquities are all drawn up in array against me; they beset me, they stare me in the face; my heart, hitherto proof against all the arrows of remorse, is at this moment shot through and through, torn and disfigured, tormented and destroyed. Ah! my dear Ambrose, resumed my partner, we are two stray sheep, whom our heavenly Father, in mercy, would lead back gently to the fold. It is he himself, my child, it is he who warns and guides us. Let us not be deaf to the call of his voice; let us abandon all our wicked courses; let us begin from this day to work out our salvation with diligence and in the spirit of repentance: we had better spend the remainder of our days in this con-

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vent, and consecrate them to penitence and devotion.

I applauded Raphael's sentiment, continued brother Ambrose, and we formed the glorious resolution of becoming Carthusians. To carry it into effect, we applied to the venerable prior, who was no sooner made acquainted with our purpose, than, to ascertain whether our call was from the world above or the world beneath, he appointed us to cells, and all the strictness of monkish discipline, for a whole year. We acted up to the rules with equal regularity and fortitude, and, by way of reward, were admitted among the novices. Our condition was so much what we wished it, and our hearts were so full of religious zeal, that we underwent the toils of our novitiate with unflinching courage. When that was over, we professed; after which, Don Raphael, appearing admirably well qualified, both by natural talent and various experience, for the management of secular concerns, was chosen assistant to an old friar who was at that time proctor. The son of Lucinda would infinitely have preferred dedicating every remaining moment of his existence to prayer; but he found it necessary to sacrifice his taste for devotion, in furtherance of the general prosperity. He entered with so much zeal and knowledge into the interests of the house, that he was considered as the most eligible person to succeed the old proctor, who died three years afterwards. Don Raphael accordingly fills that office at present; and it may be truly said that he discharges his duty to the entire satisfaction.

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of all our fathers, who praise in the highest terms his conduct in the administration of our temporalities. What is most of all miraculous, and shows the hand of heaven in his conversion, is that, with such an accumulation of business rushing in upon him in his bursarial department, his regards are inalienably fixed on the world to come. When business leaves him but a moment to recruit nature, instead of lavishing the short period in indulgence, his thoughts wing their way into the regions of devout and holy meditation. In short, he is the most exemplary member of this body.

At this period of our conversation I interrupted Lamela by an ebullition of joy to which I gave vent at the sight of Raphael coming in. Here he is! exclaimed I; behold that righteous bursar for whom I have been so impatiently waiting. With a leap and a bound did I run to meet and embrace him. He submitted to the hug with his newly-acquired resignation; and, without betraying the slightest shock at meeting with an old companion of his profaner hours, his words were dictated by the spirit of gentleness and humility: The powers above be praised, Signor de Santillane, the powers be praised for this kind providence whereby we meet again. In good truth, my dear Raphael, replied I, your happy destiny pleases me as much as if it had been my own good luck; brother Ambrose has told me the whole story of your conversion, and the tale almost moved me to a similar change. What a glorious lot for you two, my friends, when you have reason to flatter

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yourselves with being among that picked number of the elect, who have eternal happiness thrust upon them whether they will or no!

Two miserable sinners like ourselves, resumed the son of Lucinda, with an air which marked the extreme of sanctified morality, must not hope that our own merits are of weight enough to save our souls; but even the wicked one who repenteth findeth grace with the Father of mercies. And you, Signor Gil Blas, added he, is it not time to lay in a claim for pardon of the offences which you have committed? What is your business here in Valencia? Are you not hankering after some office of devil's deputy, and making shipwreck of your voyage to another world? Not so, by the blessing of heaven, answered I; since I turned my back on the court, I have led a very moral sort of life; sometimes enjoying rural recreations on an estate of mine at a few leagues' distance from this town, and sometimes coming hither to pass my time with my friend the governor, whom you both of you must know perfectly well.

On this cue I related to them the story of Don Alphonso de Leyva. They heard the particulars with attention; and on my telling them that I had carried to Samuel Simon, on the part of that nobleman, the three thousand ducats of which we had robbed him, Lamela interrupted the thread of my narrative, and addressing his discourse to Raphael, said, Father Hilary, if this be true, the honest vender of wares has no reason to quarrel with a robbery which has paid him fifty per cent.; and our con-

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sciences, as far as that indictment goes, may bask in the sunshine of acquitted innocence. Brother Ambrose and I, said the bursar, did actually, on the assumption of the habit, send Samuel Simon fifteen hundred ducats privately, by a pious ecclesiastic who made a pilgrimage to Xelva for the sole purpose of accomplishing this restitution; but it will go hard with Samuel at the general reckoning, if he for filthy lucre could soil his fingers with that sum, after having been reimbursed in full by Signor de Santillane. But, said I, how do you know that your fifteen hundred ducats were faithfully paid into his hands? Unquestionably they were! exclaimed Don Raphael; I would answer for the disinterested purity of that ecclesiastic as soon as for my own. I would be your collateral security, said Lamela; he is a priest of the strictest sanctity, a sort of universal almoner; and though many times cited for sums of money deposited with him for charitable uses, he has always nonsuited the plaintiffs, and gone out of court with an augmentation of alms-giving notoriety.

Our conversation continued for some time longer: at length we parted, with many a pious exhortation on their side, always to have the fear of the Lord before my eyes, and with many an earnest entreaty on mine, that they would remember me constantly in their prayers. Don Alphonso was now the first object of my search. You will never guess, said I, with whom I have just had a long conference. I am but now come from two venerable Carthusians of your acquaintance; the name of the one is Father

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Hilary, that of the other, brother Ambrose. You are mistaken, answered Don Alphonso; I am not acquainted with a single Carthusian. Pardon me, replied I; you have seen brother Ambrose at Xelva in the capacity of commissary, and Father Hilary as register to the inquisition. O heaven! exclaimed the governor with surprise, can it be within the bounds of possibility that Raphael and Lamela should have turned Carthusians? It is even so, answered I; they professed several years ago. The former is bursar and proctor to the convent, the latter, porter.

The son of Don Cæsar rubbed his forehead twice or thrice, then shaking his head, These worshipful officers of the inquisition, said he, most assuredly purpose playing over the old farce on a new stage here. You judge of them by prejudice, answered I, from the impression of their characters as men of sin: but had you been edified by their lectures as I have been, you would think more favorably of their holiness. To be sure, it is not for mortal men to fathom the depth of other men's hearts; but to all appearance they are two prodigals returned home. It possibly may be so, replied Don Alphonso: there are many instances of libertines, who hide their heads in cloisters, after having scandalized human nature by their obliquities, to expatiate their offences by a severe penance: I heartily wish that our two monks may be such libertines restored.

Well! and why not? said I. They have embraced

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the monastic life of their own accord, and have squared their conduct for a length of time according to the maxims of their order. You may say what you please, retorted the governor; but I do not like the convent's rents being received by this Father Hilary, of whom I cannot help entertaining a very untoward opinion. When the fine story he told us of his adventures comes across my mind, I tremble for the reverend brotherhood. I am willing to believe with you, that he has taken the vow with the pious intention of keeping it; but the blaze of gold may be too much for the weakness of his regenerated eyesight. It is bad policy to lock up a reformed drunkard in a wine cellar.

In the course of a few days Don Alphonso's misgivings were fully justified; these two official props and stays of the establishment ran away with the year's revenue. This news, which was immediately noised about the town, could not do otherwise than set the tongues of the wits in motion; for they always make themselves merry at the crosses and losses of the well-endowed religious orders. As for the governor and myself, we condoled with the Carthusians, but kept our acquaintance with the apostate pilferers in the background.

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CHAPTER VII.

GIL BLAS RETURNS TO HIS SEAT AT LIRIAS. SCIPIO'S AGREEABLE INTELLIGENCE, AND A REFORM IN THE DOMESTIC ARRANGEMENTS.

I PASSED a week at Valencia in the first company, living on equal terms with the best of the nobility. Plays, balls, concerts, grand dinners, ladies' parties, all things that heart could wish or vanity grow tall upon, were provided for me by the governor and his lady, to whom I paid my court so dexterously, that they were heartily sorry to see me set out on my return to Lirias. They even obliged me, before they would let me go, to engage for a division of my time between them and my hermitage. It was determined that I should spend the winter in Valencia, and the summer at my seat. After this bargain, my benefactors left me at liberty to tear myself from them, and go where their kindness would be always staring me in the face.

Scipio, who was waiting impatiently for my return, was ready to jump out of his skin for joy at the sight of me; and his ecstasies were doubled at my circumstantial account of the journey. And now for your history, my friend, said I, taking breath: to what moral uses have you turned the solitary period of my absence? Has the time passed agreeably? As well, answered he, as it could with a servant to whom nothing is so dear as the presence of his master. I have walked over our little domain,

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circuitously and diagonally: sometimes seated on the margin of a fountain in our wood, I have taken pleasure in beholding the transparency of its waters, which are as pellucid as those of the sacred spring, whose projection from the rock made the vast forest of Albunea to resound with the roar of the cascade: sometimes, lying at the foot of a tree, I have listened to the song of the linnet or the nightingale. At other times I have hunted or fished; and, what has given me more rational delight than all these pastimes, I have whiled away many a profitable hour in the improvement of my mind.

I interrupted my secretary in a tone of eager inquiry, to ask where he had procured books. I found them, said he, in an elegant library here in the house, whither Master Joachim took me. Heyday! in what corner, resumed I, can this said library be? Did we not go over the whole building on the day of our arrival? You fancied so, rejoined he; but you are to know that we only explored three sides of the square, and forgot the fourth. It was there that Don Cæsar, when he came to Lirias, employed part of his time in reading. There are in this library some very good books, left as a never-failing phylactery against the blue devils, when our gardens despoiled of Flora's treasure, and our woods of their leafy honors, shall no longer challenge those miscreant invaders to combat in the forest or the bower. The lords of Leyva have not done things by halves, but have catered for the mind as well as for the body.

This intelligence filled me with sincere rapture.

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I was shown to the fourth side of the square, and feasted with an intellectual banquet. Don Cæsar's room I immediately determined to make my own. That nobleman's bed was still there, with correspondent furniture, consisting of historical tapestry, representing the rape of the Sabine women by the Romans. From the bedchamber, I went into a closet fitted up with low bookcases well filled, and over them the portraits of the Spanish kings. Near a window whence you command a prospect of a most bewitching country, there was an ebony writing-desk and a large sofa, covered with black morocco. But I gave my attention principally to the library. It was composed of philosophers, poets, historians, and abounded in romances. Don Cæsar seemed to give the preference to that light reading, if one might judge by the profusion of supply. I must own, to my shame, that my taste was not at all above the level of those productions, notwithstanding the extravagances they delight in stringing together; whether it was owing to my not being a very critical reader at that time, or because the Spaniards are naturally addicted to the marvellous. I must nevertheless plead, in my own justification, that I was alive to the charms of a sprightly and popular morality, and that Lucian, Horace, and Erasmus became my favorite and standard authors.

My friend, said I to Scipio, when my eyes had coursed over my library, here is wherewithal to feed and pamper our minds; but our present business is to reform our household. On that subject I can

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spare you a great deal of trouble, answered he. During your absence I have sifted your people thoroughly, and flatter myself it is no empty boast to say that I know them. Let us begin with Master Joachim: I take him to be as great a scoundrel as ever breathed, and have no doubt but he was turned away from the archbishop's for errors which were too great to be excepted in the passing of his accounts. Yet we must keep him for two reasons: the first, because he is a good cook; and the second, because I shall always have an eye over him; I shall peep into his actions like a jackdaw into a marrow-bone, and he must be a more cunning fellow than I take him for, to evade my vigilance. I have already told him that you intended discharging three fourths of your establishment. This declaration stuck in his stomach; and he assured me that, owing to his extreme desire of living with you, he would be satisfied with half his present wages rather than be turned off, which made me suspect that he was tied to the string of some petticoat in the hamlet, and did not like to break up his quarters. As for the under-cook, he is a drunkard, and the porter a foul-mouthed Cerberus, of whose guardianship our gates are in no want; neither is the game-keeper a necessary evil. I shall take the latter office myself, as you may see to-morrow, when we have got our fowling-pieces in order, and are provided with powder and shot. With regard to the footmen, one of them is an Arragonese, and to my mind a very good sort of fellow. We will keep him; but all the rest are such rapscallions,

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that I would not advise you to harbor one of them, if you wanted an army of attendants.

After having fully debated the point, we resolved to keep well with the cook, the scullion, the Arragonese, and to get rid of the remainder as decently as we could; all which was planned and executed on the same day, mollifying the bitter dose by the application of a few pistoles, which Scipio took from our strong box, and distributed among them as from me. When we had carried this reform into effect, order was soon established in our mansion; we divided the business fairly among our remaining people, and began to look into our expenses. I could willingly have been contented with very frugal commons; but my secretary, loving high dishes and relishing bits, was not a man who would suffer Master Joachim to hold his place as a sinecure. He kept his talents in such constant play, working double tides at dinner and at supper, that any one would have thought we had been converted by father Hilary, and were working out the term of our probation.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LOVES OF GIL BLAS AND THE FAIR ANTONIA.

Two days after my return from Valencia to Lirias, clodpole Basil, my farming man, came at my dressing-time to beg the favor of introducing his daughter

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Antonia, who was very desirous, as he said, to have the honor of paying her respects to her new master. I answered that it was very proper, and would be well received. He withdrew, and in a few minutes returned with his peerless Antonia. That epithet, though bold, will not be thought extravagant in the case of a girl from sixteen to eighteen years of age, uniting to regular features the finest complexion and the brightest eyes in the world. She was dressed in nothing better than a stuff gown; but a stature somewhat above the female standard, a dignified deportment, and such graces as soared higher than the mere freshness and glow of youth, communicated to her rustic attire the simplicity of classical costume. She had no cap on her head; her hair was fastened behind with a knot of flowers, according to the chaste severity of the Spartan fashionables.

When she illumined my chamber with her presence, I was struck as much on a heap by her beauty as ever were the princes, knights, nobles, and strangers, assembled at the solemn feast and tournament of Charlemain, by the personal charms of Angelica. Instead of receiving Antonia with modish indifference, and paying her compliments of course, instead of ringing the changes on her father's happiness in possessing so lovely a daughter, I stood stock still, staring, gaping, stammering: I could not have uttered an articulate sound for the universal world. Scipio, who saw clearly what was the matter with me, took the words out of my mouth, and accepted those bills of admiration which my

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affairs were in too much disorder to admit of my duly honoring. For her part, my figure being shrouded by a dressing-gown and nightcap, like the orb of day by a winter fog, she accosted me without being shamefaced, and paid her duty in terms which fired all the combustibles in my composition, though her words were but the holiday expressions of commonplace salutation. In the mean time, while my secretary, Basil, and his daughter, were engaged in reciprocal exchange of civility, I found my senses again; and passed from one extreme of absurdity to another, just as if I had thought that a hare-brained loquacity would be a set-off against the idiotic silence of my first encounter. I exhausted all my stock of well-bred rodomontade, and expressed myself with so unguarded a freedom as to make Basil look about him; so that he, with his eye upon me as a man who would set every engine at work to seduce Antonia, was in a hurry to get her safely out of my apartment, with a resolved purpose, probably, of withdrawing her forever from my pursuit.

Scipio, finding himself alone with me, said with a smile, Here is another defence for you against the blue devils! I did not know that your farming man had so pretty a daughter; for I had never seen her before, though I have been twice at his house. He must have taken infinite pains to keep her out of the way, and it is impossible to be angry with him for it. What the plague! here is a morsel for a lickerish palate! But there seems to be no necessity for blazoning her perfections to you; their very first

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glance dazzled you out of countenance. I do not deny it, answered I. Ah, my beloved friend; I have surely seen an inhabitant of the realms above; the electrical spark now thrills through all my frame, it scorches like lightning, yet tingles like the vivifying fluid at my heart.

You delight me beyond measure, replied my secretary, by giving me to understand that you have at length fallen in love. Nothing but a mistress was wanting to complete your rural establishment at all points. Thanks to heaven, you are now likely to be accommodated in every way. I am well aware that we shall have a hard matter to elude Basil's vigilance; but leave that to me, and I will undertake before the end of three days to manage a private meeting for you with Antonia. Master Scipio, said I, it is not so sure that you would be able to keep your word; but, at all events, I have not the least desire to make the experiment. I will have nothing to do with the ruin of that girl; for she is an angel, and does not deserve to be numbered among the fallen ones. Therefore, instead of laying the guilt upon your soul of assisting me in her dishonor, I have made up my mind to marry her with your kind help, supposing her heart not to be pre-occupied by a prior attachment. I had no idea, said he, of your directly plunging headlong into the cold bath of matrimony. The generality of landlords, in your place, would stand upon the ancient tenure of manorial rights: they would not deal with Antonia upon the square of modern law and gospel, till after failure

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in the establishment of their feudal privileges. But though this may be the way of the world, do not suppose that I am by any means against your honorable passion, or at all wish to dissuade you from your purpose. Your bailiff's daughter deserves the distinction you design for her, if she can give you the first fruits of her heart, an offering of sensibility and gratitude; that is what I shall ascertain this very day by talking with her father, and possibly with her.

My agent was a man to transact his business according to the letter. He went to see Basil privately, and in the evening came to me in my closet, where I waited for him with impatience, somewhat exasperated by apprehension. There was a slyness in his countenance, whence my prognostic inclined to the brighter side. Judging, said I, by that look of suppressed merriment, you are come to acquaint me that I shall soon be at the summit of human bliss. Yes, my dear master, answered he, the heavens smile upon your vows. I have talked the matter over with Basil and his daughter, declaring your intentions without reserve. The father is delighted at the idea of your asking his blessing as a son-in-law; and you may set your heart at rest about Antonia's taste in a husband. Darts and flames! cried I, in an ecstasy of amorous transport; what! am I so happy as to have made myself agreeable to that lovely creature? Never question it, replied he; she loves you already. It is true, she has not owned so much by word of mouth; but my assurance rests on the tale-telling

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sparkle of her eye, when your proposals were made known to her. And yet you have a rival! A rival! exclaimed I, with a faltering voice and a cheek blanched with fear. Do not let that give you the least uneasiness, said he; your competitor cannot bid very high, for he is no other than Master Joachim, your cook. Ah! the hangdog! said I, with an involuntary shout of laughter: this is the reason, then, why he had so great an objection to being turned out of my service. Exactly so, answered Scipio; within these few days he made proposals of marriage to Antonia, who politely declined them. With submission to your better judgment, replied I, it would be expedient—at least, so it strikes me—to get rid of that strange fellow before he is informed of my intended match with Basil's daughter: a cook, as you are aware, is a dangerous rival. You are perfectly in the right, rejoined my trusty counsellor; we must clear the premises of him—he shall receive his discharge from me to-morrow morning, before he puts a finger in the fricandeaus; thus you will have nothing more to fear either from his poisonous sauces or bewitching tongue. Yet it goes rather against the grain with me to part with so good a cook; but I sacrifice the interests of my own belly to the preservation of your precious person. You need not, said I, take on so for his loss; he had no exclusive patent; and I will send to Valencia for a cook, who shall outcook all his fine cookery. According to my promise, I wrote immediately to Don Alphonso, to let him know that our kitchen wanted a prime min-

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ister; and on the following day he filled up the vacancy in so worthy a manner as reconciled Scipio at once to the change in culinary politics.

Though my adroit and active secretary had assured me of Antonia's secret self-congratulation on the conquest of her landlord's heart, I could not venture to rely solely on his report. I was fearful lest he should have been entrapped by false appearances. To be more certain of my bliss, I determined on speaking in person to the fair Antonia. I therefore went to Basil's house, and confirmed to him what my ambassador had announced. This honest peasant, of patriarchal simplicity and golden-aged frankness, after having heard me through, did not hesitate to own that it would be the greatest happiness of his life to give me his daughter; but, added he, you are by no means to suppose that it is because you are lord of the manor. Were you still steward to Don Cæsar and Don Alphonso, I should prefer you to all other suitors who might apply: I have always felt a sort of kindness towards you; and nothing vexes me but that Antonia has not a thumping fortune to bring with her. I want not the vile dross, said I; her person is the only dowry that I covet. Your humble servant for that, cried he; but you will not settle accounts with me after that fashion; I am not a beggar, to marry my daughter upon charity. Basil de Buenotrigo is in circumstances, by the blessing of Providence, to portion her off decently; and I mean that she should set out a little supper, if you are to be at the expense of dinners. In a word,

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the rental of this estate is only five hundred ducats: I shall raise it to a thousand on the strength of this marriage.

Just as you please, my dear Basil, replied I; we are not likely to have any dispute about money matters. We are both of a mind; all that remains is to get your daughter's consent. You have mine, said he, and that is enough. Not altogether so, answered I; though yours may be absolutely necessary, no business can be done without hers. Hers follows mine of course, replied he; I should like to catch her murmuring against my sovereign commands! Antonia, rejoined I, with dutiful submission to paternal authority, is ready, without question, to obey your will implicitly in all things; but I know not whether in the present instance she would do so without violence to her own feelings; and, should that be the case, I could never forgive myself for being the occasion of unhappiness to her; in short, it is not enough that I obtain her hand from you, if her heart is to heave a sigh at the decision of her destiny. O, blessed virgin! said Basil; all these fine doctrines of philosophy are far above my reach; speak to Antonia your own self, and you will find, or I am very much mistaken, that she wishes for nothing better than to be your wife. These words were no sooner out of his mouth, than he called his daughter, and left me with her for a few short minutes.

Not to trifle with so precious an opportunity, I broke my mind to her at once. Lovely Antonia,

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said I, it remains with you to fix the color of my future days. Though I have your father's consent, do not think so meanly of me as to suppose that I would avail myself of it to violate the sacred freedom of your choice. Rapturous as must be the possession of your charms, I waive my pretensions if you but tell me that your duty, and not your will, complies. It would be affectation to put on such a repugnance, answered she; the honor of your addresses is too flattering to excite any other than agreeable sensations, and I am thankful for my father's tender care of me, instead of demurring to his will. I am not sure whether such an acknowledgment may not be contrary to the rules of female reserve in the polite world; but if you were disagreeable to me, I should be plain-spoken enough to tell you so; why, then, should I not be equally free in owning the kind feelings of my heart?

At sounds like these, which I could not hear without being enraptured, I dropped on my knee before Antonia, and in the excess of my tender emotions, taking one of her fair hands, kissed it with an affectionate and impassioned action. My dear Antonia, said I, your frankness enchants me: go on; let nothing induce you to depart from it; you are conversing with your future husband; let your soul expand itself, and reveal all its inmost emotions in his presence. Thus, then, may I entertain the flattering hope that you will not frown on the union of our destinies! The coming in of Basil at this moment prevented me from giving further vent to the delight-

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ful sensations which thrilled through me. Impatient to know how his daughter had behaved, and ready primed for scolding in case she had been perverse or coy, he made up to me immediately. Well, now, said he, are you satisfied with Antonia? So much so, answered I, that I am going this very moment to set forward the preparations for our marriage. So saying, I left the father and daughter, for the purpose of taking counsel with my secretary thereupon.

CHAPTER IX.

NUPTIALS OF GIL BLAS WITH THE FAIR ANTONIA; THE STYLE AND MANNER OF THE CEREMONY; THE PERSONS ASSISTING THEREAT; AND THE FESTIVITIES ENSUING THEREUPON.

THOUGH there was no occasion to consult with the lords of Leyva about my marriage, yet both Scipio and myself were of opinion that I could not decently do otherwise than communicate to them my purpose of connecting myself with Basil's daughter, and just pay them the compliment of asking their advice, after the act was finally determined on.

I immediately went off for Valencia, where my visit was a matter of surprise, and still more the purport of it. Don Cæsar and Don Alphonso, who were acquainted with Antonia, having seen her more than once, wished me joy on my good fortune in a wife. Don Cæsar, in particular, made his speech

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upon the occasion with so much youthful fire, that if there had not been reason to suppose his lordship weaned, by that icy moralist, time, from certain naughty propensities, I should have suspected him of going to Lirias now and then, not so much to look after his concerns there, as after his little empress of the dairy. Seraphina, too, with the kindest assurances of a lively interest in whatever might befall me, said that she had heard a very favorable character of Antonia; but, added she, with a malicious fling, as if to taunt me with my supercilious reception of Sephora's amorous advances, even though her beauty had not been so much the talk of the country, I could have depended on your taste, from former experience of its delicacy and fastidiousness.

Don Cæsar and his son did not stop at cold approbation of my marriage, but declared that they would defray all the expenses of it. Measure back your steps, said they, to Lirias, and stay quietly there till you hear further from us. Make no preparation for your nuptials, for we shall make that our concern. To meet their kind intentions with becoming gratitude, I returned to my mansion, and acquainted Basil and his daughter with the projected kindness of our patrons. We determined to wait their pleasure with as much patience as falls to the lot of poor human nature under such circumstances. Eight long days dragged out their tedious measure, and brought no tidings of our bliss. But the rewards of self-control are not the less assured for being slow: on the ninth, a coach drawn by four mules drove up,

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with a cargo of mantua-makers for the bride, and an assortment of rich silks on which to exercise their art. Several livery servants, mounted on mules, accompanied the cavalcade. One of them brought me a letter from Don Alphonso. That nobleman sent me word that he would be at Lirias next day with his father and his wife, and that the marriage ceremony should be performed on the day after that, by the vicar-general of Valencia. And just so it came to pass: Don Cæsar, his son, and Seraphina, with that venerable dignitary, were punctual to their appointment, all four of them in a coach and six, — none of your mules, like the mantua-makers, — preceded by another coach and four, with Seraphina's women; and the rear was brought up by a company of the governor's guards.

The governor's lady had hardly entered the house before she testified an ardent longing to see Antonia, who, on her part, no sooner knew that Seraphina was arrived, than she ran forward to bid her welcome, with a respectful kiss upon her hand, so gracefully and modestly impressed, that all the company were enchanted at the action. And now, madam, said Don Cæsar to his daughter-in-law, what do you think of Antonia? Could Santillane have made a better choice? No, answered Seraphina; they are worthy each of the other; there can be no doubt but their union will be most happy. In short, every one was lavish in the praise of my intended; and if they felt her beams so powerfully under the eclipse of a stuff gown, what must they not have endured from

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her brightness in the meridian sunshine of her wedding finery! One would have fancied she had been clothed in silks, jewels, and fine linen from her cradle, by the dignity of her air and the ease of her deportment.

The happy moment which was to unite two fond lovers in the bands of Hymen being arrived, Don Alphonso took me by the hand and led me to the altar, while Seraphina conferred the like honor on the bride elect. Our procession had marched in fit and decent order through the hamlet to the chapel, where the vicar-general was waiting to go through the service; and the ceremony was performed amidst the heartfelt congratulations of the inhabitants, and of all the wealthy farmers in the neighborhood, whom Basil had invited to Antonia's wedding. Their daughters, too, came in their train, tricked out in ribbons and in flowers, and dancing to the music of their own tambourines. We returned to the mansion under the same escort; and there, by the provident attentions of Scipio, who officiated as high steward and master of the ceremonies, we found three tables set out; one for the principals of the party, another for their household, and the third, which was by far the largest, for all invited guests promiscuously. Antonia was at the first, the governor's lady having made a point of it; I did the honors of the second; and Basil was placed at the head of that where the country people dined. As for Scipio, he never sat down, but was here, there, and everywhere, fetching and carrying, changing plates and filling bumpers,

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urging the company to call freely for what they wanted, and egging them on to mirth and jollity.

The entertainment had been prepared by the governor's cooks; and that is as much as to say that there were all the delicacies imaginable, in season or out of season. The good wines laid in for me by Master Joachim were set running at a furious rate; the guests were beginning to feel their jovial influence, pleasantry and repartee gave a zest to conviviality, when on a sudden our harmony was interrupted by an alarming occurrence. My secretary, being in the hall where I was dining with Don Alphonso's principal officers and Seraphina's women, suddenly fainted. I started up and ran to his assistance; and, while I was employed in bringing him about, one of the women was taken ill also. It was evident to the whole company that this sympathetic malady must involve some mysterious incident, as in effect it turned out, almost immediately, that thereby hung a tale; for Scipio soon recovered, and said to me in a low voice, Why must one man's meat be another man's poison, and the most auspicious of your days the curse of mine? But every man bears the bundle of his sins upon his back, and my pack-saddle is once more thrown across my shoulders in the person of my wife.

Powers of mercy! exclaimed I, this can never be! It is all a romance. What! you the husband of that lady whose nerves were so affected by the disturbance? Yes, sir, answered he, I am her husband; and fortune, if you will take the word of a sinner,

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could not have done me a dirtier office than by conjuring up such a grievance as this. I know not, my friend, replied I, what reasons you may have for thus belaboring your rib with wordy buffets; but however she may be to blame, in mercy keep a bridle on your tongue; if you have any regard for me, do not displace the mirth and spoil the pleasure of this nuptial meeting by ominous disorder or enraged questions of past injuries. You shall have no reason to complain on that score, rejoined Scipio, but shall see presently whether I am not a very apt dissembler.

With this assurance he went forward to his wife, whom her companions had also brought back to life and recollection, and, embracing her with as much apparent fervor as if his raptures had been real, Ah, my dear Beatrice, said he, heaven has at length united us again after ten years of cruel separation! But this blissful moment is well purchased by whole ages of torturing suspense! I know not, answered his spouse, whether you really are at all the happier for having recovered a part of yourself: but of this at least I am fully certain, that you never had any reason to run away from me as you did. A fine story indeed! You found me one night with Signor Don Ferdinand de Leyva, who was in love with my mistress Julia, and consulted me on the subject of his passion; and only for that, you must take it into your stupid head that I was caballing with him against your honor and my own: thereupon that poor brain of yours was turned with jealousy; you quitted Toledo in a huff, and ran away

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from your own flesh and blood as you would from a monster of the deserts, without leaving word why or wherefore. Now, which of us two, be so good as to tell me, has most reason to take on and be pettish? Your own dear self, beyond all question, replied Scipio. Beyond all question, reëchoed she, my own ill-used self. Don Ferdinand, very shortly after you had taken yourself off from Toledo, married Julia, with whom I continued as long as she lived; and, after we had lost her by sudden death, I came into my lady her sister's service, who, as well as all her maids,—and I would do as much for them,—will give me a good character; honest and sober, and a very termagant among the impertinent fellows.

My secretary, having nothing to allege against such a character from my lady and her maids, was determined to make the best of a bad bargain. Once for all, said he to his spouse, I acknowledge my bad behavior, and beg pardon for it before this honorable assembly. It was now time for me to act the mediator, and to move Beatrice for an act of amnesty, assuring her that her husband from this time forward would make it the great object of his life to play the husband to her satisfaction. She began to see that there was reason in roasting of eggs, and all present were loud in their congratulations on the triumph of suffering virtue, and the renovated pledge of broken vows. To bind the contract firmer, and make it memorable, they were seated next to one another at table; their healths were drank according to the laws of toasting: Wish you joy! Many

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returns of this happy day! rang round on every side: one would have sworn that the dinner was given for their reconciliation, and not on account of my marriage.

The third table was the first to be cleared. The young villagers jumped up in a body; the lads took out their blooming partners; the tambourines struck up a merry beat; spectators flocked from the other tables, and caught the enlivening spirit from the gay bustle of the scene. Every limb and muscle of every individual was in motion: the household of the governor and his lady formed a set, apart from the rustics of the company, while their superiors did not disdain to mingle with the homelier dancers. Don Alphonso danced a saraband with Seraphina, and Don Cæsar another with Antonia, who afterwards took me for her partner. She did not perform much amiss, considering that she never got much further than the five positions, in learning which she had her ankles kicked to pieces by a provincial dancing-master at Albarazin, while on a visit to a tradesman's wife, one of her relations. As for me, who, as I have already said, had taken lessons at the Marchioness de Chaves's, I figured away as the principal man in this rural ballet. With regard to Beatrice and Scipio, they preferred a little private conversation to dancing, that they might compare notes on the subject of wear and tear during the painful period of separation: but their billing and cooing was interrupted by Seraphina, who, having been informed of this dramatic discovery, sent for them to pay the

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customary compliments of congratulation. My good people, said she, on this day of general joy, it gives me additional pleasure to see you two restored to one another. My friend Scipio, I return you your wife under a firm belief that she has always conducted herself as became a woman; take up your abode with her here, and be a good husband to her. And you, Beatrice, attach yourself to Antonia, and let her be as much the object of your devoted service, as Signor de Santillane is that of your husband. Scipio, who could not possibly, after this, think of Penelope as fit to hold a candle to his own wife, promised to treat her with all the deference due to such a paragon of conjugal fidelity.

The country people, having kept up the dance till late, withdrew to their own homes; but the rejoicings were prolonged by the company in the house. There was a grand supper, and at bed-time the vicar-general pronounced the blessing of consummation. Seraphina undressed the bride, and the lords of Leyva did me the same honor. The ridiculous part of the business was, that Don Alphonso's officers and his lady's attendants took it into their heads, by way of diverting themselves, to perform the same ceremony: they also undressed Beatrice and Scipio, who, to render the scene supremely farcical, gravely allowed themselves to be untrussed, and put to bed with all nuptial pomp and state.

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CHAPTER X.

THE HONEY-MOON (A VERY DULL TIME FOR THE READER AS A THIRD PERSON) ENLIVENED BY THE COMMENCEMENT OF SCIPIO'S STORY.

"'Tis heaven itself, 'tis ecstasy of bliss,
Uninterrupted joy, untired excess;
Mirth following mirth, the moments dance away;
Love claims the night, and friendship rules the day."

On the day after the wedding, the lords of Leyva returned to Valencia, after having lavished on me a thousand marks of friendship. There was such a general clearance, that my secretary and myself, with our respective wives, and our usual establishment, were left in undisturbed possession of our own home.

The efforts which we both made to please our ladies were not thrown away: I breathed by degrees into the partner of my joys and sorrows as much love for me as I entertained for her; and Scipio made his better part forget the woes and privations he had occasioned her. Beatrice, who had very winning ways with her, and was all things to all women, had no difficulty about worming herself into the good graces of her new mistress, and gaining her complete confidence. In short, we all four agreed admirably well together, and began to enjoy a bliss above the common lot of humanity. Every day rolled along more delightfully than the last. Antonia was pensive and demure; but Beatrice and myself were enlisted in the crew of mirth; and even

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though we had been constitutionally sedate, Scipio was among us, and he was of himself a pill to purge melancholy. The best creature in the world for a snug little party! one of those merry drolls who have only to show their comical faces, and set the table in a roar of inextinguishable laughter.

One day, when we had taken a fancy to go after dinner, and doze away the usual interval in the most sequestered spot about the grounds, my secretary got into such exuberant spirits as to chase away the drowsy god by his exhilarating sallies. Do hold your tongue, my loquacious friend, said I; or else, if you are determined to wage war against this lazy custom of our afternoons, at least tell us something which we shall be the wiser for hearing. With all my heart and soul, sir, answered he. Would you have me go through all fabulous histories of wandering knights, distressed damsels, giants, enchanted castles, and the whole train of legendary adventures? I had much rather hear your own true history, replied I; but that is a pleasure which you have not thought fit to give me so long as we have lived together, and I seem likely to go without it to the end of the chapter. How happens that? said he. If I have not told you my own story, it is because you never expressed the slightest wish to be troubled with the recital: therefore it is not my fault if you are in the dark about my past life; but if you are really at all curious to be let into the secret, my loquacity is very much at your service on the occasion. Antonia, Beatrice, and myself unanimously took him at his

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word, and arranged ourselves for listening like an attentive audience. The speculation was a safe one on our parts; for the tale was sure to answer, either as a stimulant or a soporific.

I certainly ought to have been descended, said Scipio, from some family of the highest rank and earliest antiquity; or, in default of such parentage, from the most distinguished orders of personal merit, such as that of St. James of Alcantara, if a man may be permitted to decide on the fittest circumstances for his own birth: but as it is not among the privileges of human nature to elect one's own father, you are to know that mine, by name Torribio Scipio, was a subaltern myrmidon of the Holy Brotherhood. As he was going back and fore on the king's highway, and looking after business in his own line, he met, once on a time, between Cuença and Toledo, with a young Bohemian babe of chance, who appeared very pretty in his eyes. She was alone, on foot, and carried her whole patrimony at her back in a kind of knapsack. Whither are you going, my little darling? said he in a philandering tone of voice, unlike the natural hoarseness of his accents. Good worthy gentleman, answered she, I am going to Toledo, where I hope to gain an honest livelihood by hook or by crook. Your intentions are highly commendable, retorted he; and I doubt not but you have many a hook and many a crook among the implements of your trade. Yes, with a blessing on my endeavors, rejoined she: I have several little ways of doing for myself: I know how to make

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washes and creams for the ladies' faces, perfumes for their noses and their chambers; then I can tell fortunes, can search for things lost with a sieve and shears, and erect figures for the taking in of shadows with a glass.

Torribio, concluding that so well provided a girl would be a very advantageous match for a man like himself, who could scarcely scrape wherewithal to support life by his own profession, though he was as good a thief-taker as the best of them, made her an offer of marriage, and she was nothing loath, nor prudishly coy. They flew on the wings of inclination and convenience to Toledo, where they were joined together; and you behold in me the happy pledge of holy and lawful matrimony. They fixed themselves in a shop on the outskirts of the town, where my mother commenced her career by selling the said washes, creams, tapes, laces, silk, thread, toys, and pedler's ware; but trade not being brisk enough to live comfortably by it, she turned fortune-teller. This drew her customers, got her countenance, credit, crowns, and pistoles: a thousand dupes of either sex soon trumpeted up the reputation of Cosclina; for so my gypsy mamma had the honor to be named. Some one or other came every day to bargain for the exercise of her skill in the black art; at one time a nephew at his wit's and purse's end, wanting to know how soon his uncle was to set off post for the other world, and leave behind him wherewithal to piece his worn-out fortunes; at another, some yielding, lovesick girl, to inquire whether the

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swain who kept her company, and had promised to marry her, would keep his word or be false-hearted.

You will take notice, if you please, that my mother always sold good luck for good money: if the accomplishment trod on the heels of the prediction, well and good; if it was fulfilled according to the rule of contraries, she was always cool, though the parties were ever so violently in a passion, and told them plainly that it was her familiar's fault, not hers; for though she paid him the highest wages, and bound him by potent spells to stir up the caldron of futurity from the bottom, like earthly cooks, he would sometimes be careless or out of humor, and apportion the ingredients wrongly.

When my mother thought the conjuncture momentous enough to raise the devil without cheapening him in the eyes of the vulgar, Torribio Scipio enacted his infernal majesty, and played the part just as if he had been born to it, humoring the hideous features of the character by a very small aggravation of his own natural face, and practising the pandemonian note of elocution in the lower octave of his voice. A person in the slightest degree superstitious would be scared out of his senses at my father's figure. But one day, as his satanic prototype would have it, there came a savage rascal of a captain, who asked to see the devil, for no earthly purpose but to run him clean through the body. The inquisition, having received notice of the devil's death, sent to take charge of his widow, and administer to his effects: as for poor little me, just seven years old at the time,

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I was sent to the foundling hospital. There were some charitable ecclesiastics on that establishment, who, being liberally paid for the education of the poor orphans, were so zealous in their office as to teach them reading and writing. They fancied there was something particularly promising about me, which made them pick me out from all the rest, and send me on their errands. I was letter-carrier, messenger, and chapel-clerk. As a token of their gratitude, they undertook to teach me Latin; but their mode of tuition was so harsh, and their discipline so severe, though I was a sort of pet with them, that, not being able to stand it longer, I ran away one morning while out on an errand, and, so far from returning to the hospital, got out of Toledo through the suburbs on the Seville side.

Though I had not then completed my ninth year, I already felt the pleasure of being free, and master of my own actions. I was without money and without food: no matter! I had no lessons to say by heart, no themes to hammer out. After having pushed on for two hours, my little legs began to refuse their office. I had never before made so long a trip. It became necessary to stop and take some rest. I sat myself down at the foot of a tree close by the highway; there, by way of amusement, I took my grammar out of my pocket, and began conning it over by way of a joke: but at length, coming to recollect the raps on the knuckles, and the castigations on the more classical seat of punishment which it had cost me, I tore it leaf by leaf with an apostrophe

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of angry import. Ah! you odious thing of a book! you shall never make me shed tears any more. While I was assuaging my vindictive spirit by strewing the ground about me with declensions and conjugations, there passed that way a hermit with a white beard, with a large pair of spectacles on his nose, and altogether an outside of much sanctity. He came up to me; and, if I was an object of speculation to him, he was no less so to me. My little man, said he with a smile, it should seem as if we had both taken a sudden liking to each other; and in that case we cannot do better than to live together in my hermitage, which is not two hundred yards distant. Your most obedient for that, answered I, pertly enough; I have not the least desire to turn hermit. At this answer, the good old man set up a roar of laughter, and said with a kind embrace, You must not be frightened at my dress; if it is not becoming, it is useful; it gives me my title to a charming retreat, and to the good-will of the neighboring villages, whose inhabitants love, or rather idolize me. Come this way, and I will clothe you in a jacket of the same stuff as mine. If you think well of it, you shall share with me the pleasures of the life I lead; and, if it does not hit your fancy, you shall not only be at liberty to leave me, but you may depend on it that in the event of our parting, I shall not fail to do something handsome by you.

I suffered myself to be persuaded, and followed the old hermit, who put several questions to me, which I answered with a truth-telling simplicity not

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always to be found in a more advanced stage of morality. On our arrival at the hermitage, he set some fruit before me, which I devoured, having eaten nothing all day but a slice of dry bread, on which I had breakfasted at the hospital in the morning. The recluse, seeing me play so good a part with my jaws, said, Courage, my good boy! do not spare my fruit; there is plenty of it, heaven be praised. I have not brought you hither to starve you. And indeed that was true enough; for an hour after our coming in, he kindled a fire, put a leg of mutton down to roast, and, while I turned the spit, laid a small table for himself and me, with a very dirty napkin upon it.

When the meat was done enough, he took it up, and cut some slices for our supper, which was no dry bargain, since we quaffed a delicious wine, of which he had laid in ample store. Well, my chicken, said he, as he rose from table, are you satisfied with my style of living? You see how we shall fare every day, if you fix your quarters here. Then, with respect to liberty, you shall do just as you please in this hermitage. All I require of you is to accompany me, whenever I go begging to the neighboring villages; you will be of use in driving an ass laden with two panniers, which the charitable peasants usually fill with eggs, bread, meat, and fish. I ask no more than that. I will do, said I, whatever you desire, provided you will not oblige me to learn Latin. Friar Chrysostom—for that was the old hermit's name—could not help smiling at my school-boy frowardness, and assured me once more that he

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should not pretend to interfere either with my studies or my inclinations.

On the very next day we went on a foraging party with the donkey, which I led by the halter. We made a profitable gleaning; for all the farmers took a pleasure in throwing somewhat into our panniers. One chucked in an uncut loaf, another a large piece of bacon; here a goose, there a pair of giblets, and a partridge to crown the whole. But without entering further into particulars, we carried home provender enough for a week; and hence you may infer the esteem and friendship in which the country people held the holy man. It is true that he was a great blessing to the neighborhood: his advice was always at their service when they came to consult him: he restored peace where discord had reigned in families, and made up matches for the daughters; he had a nostrum for almost any disease you could mention, with an assortment of pious rituals to avert the curse of barrenness.

Hence you perceive that I was in no danger of starving in my hermitage. My lodging, too, was none of the worst; stretched on good fresh straw, with a cushion of ratteen under my head, and a coverlet over me of the same stuff. I made but one nap of it all night. Brother Chrysostom, who had promised me a hermit's dress, made up an old gown of his own for me, and called me little brother Scipio. No sooner did I appear in my religious uniform, than the ass's back suffered for my genteel appearance in the eyes of the villagers. It was who

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should give most to the little brother! so much were they delighted with his spruce figure.

The easy, slothful life I led with the old hermit could not be very revolting to a boy of my age. On the contrary, it suited my taste so exactly, that I should have continued it to this time, but that the fates and destinies were weaving a more complicated tissue for my future years. It was cast in the figure of my nativity, early to rouse myself from the effeminacy of a religious life, and to take leave of brother Chrysostom after the following manner.

I often observed the old man at work upon his pillow, unsewing and sewing it up again; and one day, I saw him put in some money. This circumstance excited a tingling curiosity, which I promised myself to satisfy the first time he went to Toledo, as he generally did once a week. I waited impatiently for the day, but as yet, without any other motive than the mere desire of prying. At last the good man went his way, and I unpicked his pillow, where I found, among the stuffing, the amount of about fifty crowns in all sorts of coin.

This treasure must have accumulated from the gratitude of the peasantry, whom the hermit had cured by his nostrums, and of their wives, who had become pregnant by virtue of his spiritual interference. But however it got there, I no sooner set my eyes on the money, which might be mine without any one near me to say nay, than the gypsy voice of nature and pedigree spoke within me. An inextinguishable itch of pilfering tingled in my veins,

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and proved that we come into the world with the mark of our descent, and with our characters about us. I yielded to the temptation without a struggle, tied up my booty in a canvas bag where we kept our combs and night-caps; then, having laid aside the hermit's and resumed my foundling's dress, got clear off from the hermitage, and hugged my bag as though it had contained the boundless treasure of the Indies.

You have heard my first exploit, continued Scipio, and I doubt not but you will expect a succession of similar practices. Your anticipations will not be disappointed; for there are many such evidences of genius behind, before I come to those of my actions which prove me good as well as clever; but I shall come to them, and you will be convinced by the sequel, that a scoundrel born may be licked into virtue, as the cub of a bear into shape.

Child as I was, I knew better than to take the Toledo road; it would have been exposing myself to the hazard of meeting friar Chrysostom, who would have balanced accounts with me on a very thriftless principle. I therefore travelled in another direction, leading to the village of Galves, where I stopped at an inn kept by a landlady who was a widow of forty, and hung out the bunch of grapes to a very good purpose. This good woman no sooner kenned me, than, judging by my dress that I must be a truant from the orphan school, she asked who I was and whither I was going. I answered that, having lost my father and mother, I was look-

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ing for a place. Can you read, my dear? said she. I assured her that I could read, and write, too, with the best of them. In point of fact I could just form my letters, and join them so as to look a little like writing; and that was clerkship enough for a village pothouse. Then I will take you into my service, replied the hostess. You may earn your board easily enough by scoring up the customers and keeping my ledger. I shall give you no wages, because this inn is frequented by very genteel company, who never forget the waiters. You may reckon upon very considerable perquisites.

I clinched the bargain, reserving to myself, as you may suppose, the right of emigration whenever my abode at Galves should cease to be pleasant. No sooner was I settled in my place, than a weight lay heavy on my mind. I did not wish it to be known that I had money; and it was no easy matter to devise where it could be hidden, so as that what was sauce for the goose should not be sauce for the gander. I was not yet well enough acquainted with the house to trust the places obviously most proper for such a deposit. What a source of embarrassment is great wealth! I determined, however, on a corner of our granary under some straw; and, believing it to be safer there than anywhere else, made myself as easy about it as I well could.

The household consisted of three servants—a lubberly ostler, a young Galician chambermaid, and myself. Each of us sponged what we could upon travellers, whether on foot or on horseback. I

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always came in for some small change, when the bill was paid. Then the equestrians gave something to the ostler, for taking care of their beasts; but as for our female fellow-servant, the muleteers who passed that way chucked her under the chin, and gave her more crowns than we got farthings. I had no sooner realized a penny, than away it went to the granary, and slept with its precursors; so that the higher rose my heap, the more greedy did my little heart become. Sometimes would I kiss the hallowed images of my idolatry, and look at them with a devotional glow which few worshippers feel but those whose religion is their gold.

This inordinate passion sent me back and fore to gratify it at least thirty times a day. I often met the landlady on the staircase. She, being naturally of a suspicious temper, had a mind to find out one day what could carry me every minute to the corn loft. She therefore went up and began rummaging about everywhere, supposing perhaps that it was my receptacle for articles purloined in the house. Of course she did not forget to pull the straw about; and behold, there was my bag! Two hands in a dish and one in a purse, was not one of her proverbs; so that, finding the contents in crowns and pistoles, she thought, or seemed to think, that the money was lawfully and honestly hers. At least she had possession, and that is nine points of the law, though scarcely one of honesty. But to do the thing decently, after calling me little wretch, little rascal, and so forth, she ordered the ostler, a fellow without

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any will but hers, to give me a hearty flogging; and then turned me out of doors, with this salt eel for my breakfast, and a lady-like oath that no light-fingered gentry should ever darken her doors. In vain did I protest and vow that I had never wronged my mistress: she affirmed the direct contrary, and her word would go further than mine at any time. Thus were friar Chrysostom's savings transferred from one thief to a greater thief in the thief-taker.

I wept over the loss of my money as a father over the death of his only son; and though my tears could not bring back what I had lost, they at least answered the purpose of exciting pity in some people, who saw how bitterly they flowed, and among others in the parson, who was accidentally going by. He seemed affected by my sad plight, and took me home with him. There, to gain my confidence, or rather to pump me, he began soothing my sorrows. How much this poor child is to be pitied! said he. Is it any wonder if, thrown upon the wide world at so tender an age, he has committed a bad action? Grown up men are not always proof against the flesh or the devil. Then, addressing me, Child, added he, from what part of Spain do you come, and who are your parents? You have the look of family about you. Open your heart to me confidentially, and depend upon it, I never will desert you.

His reverence, by this kind and insinuating language, engaged me by degrees to tell him all my history, without falsification or reserve. I owned everything; and thus he moralized on the leading

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article of my confession: My little friend, though hermits ought to lay up such treasures as neither force nor fraud can wrest from them, that was no excuse for your taking the measure of punishment into your own hands: by robbing brother Chrysostom, you nevertheless sinned against that article of the decalogue which tells you not to steal; but I will engage to make the hostess return the money, and will punctually remit it to the reverend friar at his hermitage: you may therefore make your conscience perfectly easy on that score. Now, between ourselves, my conscience was perfectly callous to everything like compunction with respect to the crime in question. The parson, who had his own ends to answer, had not done with me yet. My lad, pursued he, I mean to take you by the hand, and find a good berth for you. I shall send you to-morrow morning, by the carrier, to my nephew, a canon of Toledo. He will not refuse, at my request, to admit you upon his establishment, where they live like so many sons of the church, rosily, merrily, and fatly, upon the rents of his prebendal stall: you will be perfectly comfortable there, take my word for it.

Patronage like this gave me so much encouragement, that I did not throw away another thought either upon my bag or my whipping. My mind was wholly occupied with the idea of living rosily, merrily, and fatly, like a son of the church. The following day, at breakfast time, there came, according to orders, a muleteer to the parsonage, with two mules saddled and bridled. They helped me to

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mount one, the muleteer flung his leg over the other, and we trotted for Toledo. My fellow-traveller was a good, pleasant companion, and desired nothing better than to indulge his humor at the expense of his neighbor. My little volunteer, said he, you have a good friend in his reverence, the minister of Galves. He could not give you a better proof of his kindness than by placing you with his nephew the canon, whom I have the honor of knowing, far beyond all question or comparison, to be the cock of the chapter; and a hearty one he is. None of your lantern-jawed saints, with Lent in his face, a cat-of-nine-tails on his back, and a cholera morbus in his belly. No such thing! Our doctor is rubicund in the jowl, efflorescent on the nose, with a wicked eye at a bumper or a girl; militant against no earthly pleasure, but most addicted to the good things of the table. You will be as snug there as a bug in a blanket.

This hangman of a muleteer, perceiving with what exquisite satisfaction I took in all this, went on tantalizing me with the joys of an ecclesiastical life. He never dropped the subject till we got to the village of Obisa, and stopped there to refresh our mules. Then, while bustling about the inn, he accidentally dropped a paper from his pocket, which I was cunning enough to pick up without his seeing me, and took an opportunity of reading while he was in the stable. It was a letter addressed to the governors and superintendents of the orphan school, conceived in these terms: —

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"Gentlemen: I consider it as an act at once of charity and of duty to send you back a little truant; he seems a shrewd lad enough, and may do very well with good looking after. By dint of hard and frequent chastisement, I doubt not but you will ultimately bring him to a sense of his own unworthiness and your benevolence. May a blessing be vouchsafed on your pious and charitable labors for the early extirpation of sin and wickedness!

(Signed) "THE MINISTER OF GALVES."

When I had finished reading this pleasant letter, which let me into the good intentions of his reverence the rector, it required little deliberation to determine what I was to do: from the inn to the banks of the Tagus, a space of three good miles, was but a hop, step, and jump. Fear lent me wings to escape from the governors of the foundling hospital, whither I was absolutely resolved never to return, having formed principles of taste diametrically opposite to their method of teaching the classics. I went into Toledo with as light a heart as if I had known where to get my daily bread. To be sure, it is a town of ways and means, where a man who can live by his wits need never die of hunger. Scarcely had I reached the high street, when a well-dressed gentleman, by whom I brushed, caught me by the arm, saying, My little fellow, do you want a place? You are just such a smart lad as I was looking for. And you are just the master for my money, answered I. Since that is the case, rejoined he, you

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are mine from this moment, and have only to follow me, which I did without asking any more questions.

This spark, about the age of thirty, and bearing the name of Don Abel, lodged in very handsome ready-furnished apartments. He was by profession a blacklegs; and the following was the nature of our engagement. In the morning I got him as much tobacco as would smoke five or six pipes; brushed his clothes, and ran for a barber to shave him and trim his whiskers; after which he made the circle of the tennis-courts, whence he never returned home till eleven or twelve at night. But every morning, at going out, he gave me three reals for the expenses of the day, leaving me master of my own time till ten o'clock in the evening; and, provided I was within doors by his return, all was well. He gave me a livery besides, in which I looked like a little lackey of illicit love. I took very kindly to my condition, and certainly could not have met with any more congenial with my temper.

Such and so happy had been my way of life for nearly a month, when my employer inquired whether I liked his service; and on my answer in the affirmative, Well, then! resumed he, to-morrow we shall set out for Seville, whither my concerns call me. You will not be sorry to see the capital of Andalusia. "He that hath not Seville seen," says the proverb, "Is no traveller I ween." I engaged at once to follow him all over the world. On that very day, the Seville carrier fetched away a large trunk with my master's wardrobe, and on the next morning we were on the road for Andalusia.

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Signor Don Abel was so lucky at play, that he never lost but when it was convenient; but then it was seldom convenient to stay long in a place, because those who are always losers find out, at last, that though chance is a dangerous antagonist, certainly it is a desperate one; and that accounted for our journey. On our arrival at Seville, we took lodgings near the Cordova gate, and resumed the same mode of life as at Toledo. But my master found some difference between the two towns. The Seville tennis-courts could produce players equally in fortune's good graces with himself; so that he sometimes came home a good deal out of humor. One morning, when he was biting the bridle for the loss of a hundred pistoles the day before, he asked why I had not carried his linen to the laundress. I pleaded forgetfulness. Thereupon, flying into a passion, he gave me half-a-dozen boxes on the ear in such a style, as to kindle an illumination in my blinking eyes, to which the glories of Solomon's temple were no more to be compared, than the torches in a Candlemas procession to a rush-light. There is for you, you little scoundrel! said he; take that, and learn to mind your business. Must I be eternally at your heels to remind you of what you are to do? Are your brains in your belly, and all your wits in your grinders? You are not a downright idiot. Then why not prevent my wants and anticipate my orders? After this experimental lecture, he went out for the day, leaving me in high dudgeon at a reprimand so much in the manner of

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my friend the ostler, for such a trifle as not getting up his things for the wash.

I could never learn what happened to him a short time after at a tennis-court; but one evening he came home in a terrible heat. Scipio, said he, I am bent on going to Italy, and must embark the day after to-morrow on board a vessel bound for Genoa. I have my reasons for making this little excursion; of course you will be glad to attend me, and to profit by so fine an opportunity of seeing the loveliest country on the face of the earth. My tongue gave consent; but with a salvo in my heart, and a bargain with my revenge, to give him the slip just at the moment of embarkation. This was so delightful a scheme, that I could not help imparting it to a bully by profession, whom I met in the street. During my abode in Seville, I had picked up some awkward acquaintance, and this was one of the most ungainly. I told him how and why my ears had been boxed, and then communicated my project of running away from Don Abel just before the ship was to sail, begging to know what he thought of the plan.

My bluff adviser puckered his eyebrows while he listened, and fiddled with his fingers about his whiskers: then, blaming my master very seriously, My little hero, said he, you are eternally disgraced, can never show your face again, if you sit down quietly with so paltry a satisfaction as what you propose. To let Don Abel go off by himself would be a poor revenge for wrongs like yours; the punishment should be proportioned to his crime. Let us fine

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him to the full amount of his purse and effects, which we will share like brothers after he is gone. Now, it is to be noted that though thieving fell in very naturally with the bent of my genius, the proposal rather startled me, as the robbery was upon a large scale for so young an apprentice.

And yet the arch deceiver of my innocence found the means of working me up to the perpetration, so that the result of our enterprise was as follows: This glorious ruffian, a tall, brawny fellow, came in the evening about twilight to our lodging. I showed my master's travelling trunk ready packed, and asked him whether he could carry so heavy a load upon his shoulders. So heavy as that! said he: show me where a transfer of property is to be made in my favor, and I could run with Noah's ark to the top of Mount Ararat. To prove his words, he felt the trunk, flung it carelessly over his back, and scampered down stairs. I followed nimbly; and we had just got to the street door, when Don Abel, brought home in the nick of time by the ascendency of his lucky stars, stood like an apparition, to appall our guilty souls.

Whither are you going with that trunk? said he. I was so taken by surprise, that my assurance failed me; and broad-shoulders, finding that he had drawn a blank in the lottery, threw down his booty, and took to his heels, rather than be troubled for an explanation. Once more, whither are you going with that trunk? said my master. Sir, answered I, with all the honest simplicity of a criminal pleading in

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arrest of judgment, I was going to put it on board the vessel, that we might have the less to do to-morrow, before we embark ourselves. Indeed! Then you know, retorted he, in what ship I have taken my passage? No, sir, replied I; but those who can talk Latin may always find their way to Rome: I should have inquired at the port, and somebody would have informed me. At this explanation, which left his opinion where it found it, he darted a furious glance at me. I thought, for all the world, he was going to cuff me again about the head. Who ordered you, cried he, to take my trunk out of this house? You, your own self, said I. Can you possibly have forgotten how you rated me but a few days ago? Did not you tell me, with a flea in my ear, that you would have me prevent your wants, and do beforehand from my own head whatever your service might require? Now, not to be threshed a second time for want of forethought, I was seeing your trunk safe and soon enough on board. On this the gamester, finding that I had cut my teeth of wisdom sooner than suited his purpose, turned me off very coolly, saying, Go about your business, Master Scipio, and speed as you may deserve. I do not like to play with folks who are in the habit of revoking. Get out of my sight, or I shall set your *solfeggio* in a crying key.

I spared him the trouble of telling me to go twice. Off I shot like an arrow, for fear he should unfledge me by taking away my livery. When distant enough to slacken my pace, I walked along the streets,

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musing whither I might betake myself for a night's lodging, with only two reals in my pocket. The gate of the archbishop's palace at length stared me in the face; and, as his grace's supper was then dressing, a savory odor exhaled from the kitchens, impregnating the gale with soup and sauce for a mile round. Ods haricots and cutlets! thought I; it would be no hard matter for me to dispense with one of those little side dishes, which will be of no use to the archbishop but to make out the figure of his table: nay, I would be contented only just to dip in my four fingers and thumb, and then to sup like a bear upon suckings. But how to accomplish it! Is there no way of bringing these choice morsels to a better test than that of smell? And why not? Hunger, they say, will break through stone walls. On this idea did I set my wits to work; and, by dint of conning over the subject, a stratagem struck me, which set my lungs as well as appetite in motion, just as the old carpenter kept bawling, "I have found it," like a madman, when he had hit the right nail of his proposition on the head. I ran into the court of the palace, and made the best of my way to the kitchens, calling out with all my might, "Help! help!" as if some assassin had been at my heels.

At my reiterated cries, Master Diego, the archbishop's cook, ran with three or four kitchen drudges to learn what was the matter; and seeing only me, asked why I roared so loud. Ah, good sir, answered I, with every token of exquisite distress, for mercy's sake and for St. Polycarp's, save me, I beseech you,

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from the fury of a blusterer, who swears he will kill me. But where is this disturber of the public peace? cried Diego. You have no one to quarrel with but yourself; for I do not see so much as a cat to spit at you. Go your ways, my little man, and do not be afraid; it is evidently some wag who has been playing upon your cowardice for his diversion; but he knew better than to follow you within these walls, for we would have cut his ears off at the least. No, no, said I, it was for no laughing matter that he ran after me. He is a noted footpad, and meant to rob me; I am certain that he is now waiting for me at the corner of the street. Then he may wait long enough, replied the knight of the iron spit; for you shall stay here till to-morrow. You shall sup with us, and we will give you a bed.

I was out of my little wits with joy at the mention of these last tidings; and it was like the turnpike road to paradise after crossing an Arabian desert, when, being led by Master Diego through the kitchens, I there saw my lord archbishop's supper, and the stew-pans in the last throes of parturition. There were fifteen accountable souls — for I reckoned them up — in attendance on the labor; but the litter of dishes far outnumbered the fecundity of nature in her most prolific mood: so much more gracious and bountiful is providence to the heads of the church in the indulgence of their appetites, than mindful of the worthless brute creation in the propagation of its kind. Here it was, at the fountain head of prelacy, inhaling an atmosphere of gravy, instead of just

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snuffing the scent as it lay upon the breeze, that I first shook hands with sensuality. I had the honor of supping with the scullions, and of sleeping in their room—an initiation of friendship so sincere and strong, that on the following day, when I went to thank Master Diego for his goodness in vouchsafing me a refuge, he said, Our kitchen lads have been with me in a body, to declare how excessively delighted they are with your manners, and to propose having you among them as a fellow-servant. How should you, on your part, like to make one of the society? I answered that with such a feather in my cap, I should be the vainest and the happiest of mortals. Then so be it, my friend, replied he; consider yourself henceforth as a buttress of the hierarchy. With this invitation, he introduced me to the major-domo, who thought he saw talent enough in me for a turnspit.

No sooner was I in possession of so honorable an office, than Master Diego, following the practice of cooks in great houses, who pamper up their pretty dears in private with all sorts of good things, selected me to supply a lady in the neighborhood with a regular table of butcher's meat, poultry, and game. This good friend of his was a widow on the right side of thirty, very pretty, very lively, and to all appearance contenting herself with cupboard love for her cook. His generous passion was not confined to furnishing her with bread, meat, and garnish; she drank her wine too, and the archbishop was her wine-merchant.

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The improvement of my parts kept pace with that of my carnal condition in his grace's palace, where I gave a specimen of rising genius still ringing on the trump of fame at Seville. The pages and some others of the household had a mind to get up a play on my lord archbishop's birthday. They chose a popular Spanish tragedy, and, wanting a boy about my age to personate the young King of Leon, cast me for the part. The major-domo, a great spouter, undertook to train me for the stage, and, after a few lessons, pronounced that I should not be the worst actor of the company. His grace not wishing to starve so handsome a compliment to himself, no expense was spared in getting it up magnificently. The largest hall in the palace was fitted up as a theatre, with appropriate decorations. At the side scene there was a bed of turf, on which I was to be discovered asleep, when the Moors were to rush in and take me prisoner. When we had got so forward with our rehearsals as to be sure of being ready by the time fixed, the archbishop sent out cards of invitation to all the principal families in the city.

At length the great, the important day arrived; and each performer was big with the contrivance and adjustment of his dress. Mine was brought by a tailor, accompanied by our major-domo, who, after taking the trouble of drilling me at rehearsal, wished to see justice done to my outward appearance. The tailor put me on a rich robe of blue velvet, with hanging sleeves, gold lace, fringe, and buttons: the major-domo himself crowned me with a pasteboard

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crown, studded with false diamonds and real pearls. Moreover, they gave me a sash of pink silk worked in silver; so that every new ornament was like a quill-feather in the wing of a bird. At last, about dusk, the play began. The curtain drew up for my soliloquy, the purport of which was to express, in a roundabout, poetical way, that not being able to defend myself from the influence of sleep, I was going to lie down and take it as it came. To suit the action to the word, I sidled off to the corner between the flat and the wings, and squatted down on my bed of turf; but instead of going to sleep, according to promise, I was hammering upon the means of getting into the street, and running away with my coronation finery. A little private staircase, leading under the theatre into the lower saloon, seemed to furnish the probability of success. I slid away slyly, while the audience were considering some necessary question of the play, and ran down the staircase, through the saloon to the door, calling out, "Make way! make way! I must change my dress, and run up again in a moment!" They all made a lane, for fear of hindering me; so that in less than two minutes I got clear out of the palace, under cover of the darkness, and scampered to the house of my friend who saw gentlemen's trunks safe on board.

He stared like a stuck pig at my equipment! But when I let him into the why and the wherefore, he laughed ready to split his sides. Then, shaking hands in the sincerity of his heart, because he flat-

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tered himself with the hope of a pension on the King of Leon's civil list, he wished me joy of so successful a first appearance, and joined issue with the major-domo in the prognostic, that with encouragement and practice I should turn out a first-rate actor, and make no little noise in the world. After we had diverted ourselves for some time at the expense of my manager and audience, I said to the bully, What shall we do with this magnificent dress? Do not make yourself uneasy about that, answered he. I know an honest broker, without an atom of curiosity in his composition, who will buy or sell anything with any person, provided that he gets the turn of the market upon the transaction. I will fetch him to you to-morrow morning. The knowing fellow was as good as his word; for he went out early the next day, leaving me in bed, and returned two hours afterwards with the broker, carrying a yellow bundle under his arm. My friend, said he, give me leave to introduce Signor Ybagnez of Segovia, who, in spite of the bad example set him by the trade in general, trusts to fair dealing and small profits for a moderate pittance and an unblemished character. He will tell you to a fraction what the dress you want to part with is really worth, and you may take his calculation as the balance of justice between man and man. O, yes! to a nicety, said the broker. Else wherefore live I in a Christian land, but to appraise for my neighbor as for myself? To take a mean advantage never was, thank heaven! and at these years never shall be imputed to Ybagnez of

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Segovia. Let us look a little at those articles! You are the seller; I am the buyer! We have only to agree upon an equitable price. Here they are, said the bully, pulling them out: now own the truth, — was there ever anything more magnificent? You do not often see such velvet: and then the trimming! You cannot say too much of it, answered the salesman, examining the suit with the prying eye of a dealer: it is of the very first quality. And what think you of the pearls upon this crown? resumed my friend. A little rounder, observed Ybagnez, and there would be no setting a price upon them! However, take them as they are, it is a very fine set, and I do not want to find fault about trifles. Now, your common run of appraisers, under my circumstances, would affect to disparage the goods for the sake of getting them cheaper; one of those fellows would have the conscience to offer twenty pistoles; but there is nothing like bargaining with an upright, downright man! I will give forty at a word; take them or leave them.

Had Ybagnez ventured up to a hundred, he would not have burned his fingers; for the pearls alone would have fetched two hundred anywhere. The bully, who went snacks, then said, Now only look! What a mercy it is to fall into the hands of a man not of this world! Signor Ybagnez estimates money as dross, in comparison of his principles and his soul. He may die to-night, and yet not be taken unprepared! This is too much! You make me blush, said the salesman of principle and soul; but so far

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is true, that my price is always fixed. Well, now, is it a bargain? The money down upon the nail too! Stop a moment, answered the bully; my little friend must first try on the clothes you have brought for him by my order: I am very much mistaken if they will not just fit him. The salesman then, untying his bundle, showed me a second-hand suit of dark cloth with silver buttons. I got up, and got into it: too big for me every way! but these gentlemen could have sworn it had been made to my measure. Ybagnez put it at ten pistoles; and as he was an upright, downright man, of fixed principle and soul, estimating money as dross in comparison of integrity, his first price was of course his last. He therefore took out his purse, and counted down thirty pistoles upon a table; after which he packed up the King of Leon's regalia, and went his way.

When he was gone, the bully said, I am very well satisfied with that broker. And so he well might be; for I am certain he must have received at least a hundred pistoles as hush-money. But there was no reason why the broker's benevolence should pay the debts of my gratitude: so he took half the money on the table, without saying with your leave or by your leave, and suffered me to pocket the remainder, with the following advice: My dear Scipio, with that balance of fifteen pistoles, I would have you get out of this town as fast as you can; for you may suppose that my lord archbishop will ferret you out if you are above ground. It would grieve me to the heart if, after having risen so superior to the pre-

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judice of honesty, you had the weakness to fall foul of what alone keeps it afloat — the house of correction. I answered that it was my fixed purpose to make myself scarce at Seville, and accordingly, after buying a hat and some shirts, I travelled through vineyards and olive groves to the ancient city of Carmona; and in three days afterwards arrived at Cordova.

I put up at an inn close by the market-place, giving myself out for the heir of a good family at Toledo, travelling for his pleasure. My appearance did not belie the story, and a few pistoles, which I contrived carelessly to chink within the landlord's hearing, pinned his faith upon my veracity. Probably my unfledged youth might lead him to take me for some graceless little truant who had robbed his parents and run away. But that was no concern of his: he took the thing just as I gave it him, for fear lest his curiosity should clash with my continuance at his house. For six reals a day one could live like a gentleman at this inn, where there was generally a considerable concourse of company. About a dozen people sat down at supper. It was whimsical enough; but the whole party plied their knives and forks without speaking a word, except one man, who talked incessantly, right or wrong, and made up for the silence of the rest by his eternal babble. He affected to be a wit, to tell a good story, and took great pains to make the good folks merry by his puns; and accordingly they did laugh most inextinguishably; but it was at him, not with him.

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For my part I paid so little attention to the talk of this rattle, that I should have got up from table without knowing what it was all about, if he had not brought it home to my business and my bosom. Gentlemen, cried he, just as supper was over, I have kept my best story for the last; a very droll thing happened within these few days at the archbishop of Seville's palace. I had it from a young fellow of my acquaintance, who assures me that he was present at the time. These words made my heart jump up into my throat, for I had no doubt of this being my exploit—and so it turned out. This pleasant gentleman related the facts as they actually happened, and even carried the adventure to its conclusion, of which I was as yet ignorant: but now you shall be made as wise as myself.

No sooner had I absconded, than the Moors, who were, according to the progress of the fable and the rising of the interest, to lay violent hands on me, appeared upon the stage, for the fell purpose of surprising me on my bed of turf, where the author had given them reason to expect me fast asleep; but when they thought they were just going to capot the King of Leon, they found, to their surprise, that both the king and the knave made a trick against them. Here was a hole in the ballad! The actors all lost their cue; some of them called me by name, others ran to look for me: here is a fellow bawling as though his bellows would burst, there stands another muttering to himself about the devil, just as if that reptile could stand upright in such a

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presence! The archbishop, perceiving trouble and confusion to lord it behind the scenes, asked what was the matter. At the sound of the prelate's voice, a page, who was the fiddle of the piece, came to the front and spoke thus: My lord archbishop, ladies, and gentlemen! We are extremely sorry to inform you, as players, but extremely glad, as men and Christians, that the King of Leon is at present in no danger whatever of being taken prisoner by the Moors: he has adopted effectual measures for the security of his royal person; and to the royal person, as liberty avails little without property, he has irrevocably attached the crown, insignia, and robes. And a happy deliverance for himself and Christendom! exclaimed the archbishop. He has done perfectly right to escape from the enemies of our religion, and to burst from the bonds in which their malice would have laid him. By this time, probably, he has reached the confines of his kingdom, or may have entered the capital. May no unlucky accident have retarded him on his journey! And that the sin of none such may lie heavy on my conscience, I beg leave very positively to make my pleasure known that he may proceed unmolested by any interruption from this quarter; I should be highly mortified, indeed, if his majesty's pious endeavors were to be frustrated by the slightest indignity from the ministers of that religion in whose cause he labors and suffers. The prelate, having thus declared his acquiescence in the motives of my flight, ordered my part to be read, and the play to be resumed.

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CHAPTER XI.

CONTINUATION OF SCIPIO'S STORY.

As long as I had money in my purse, my landlord was cap in hand; but the moment he began to suspect that the funds were low, he became high and mighty, picked a German quarrel with me, and one morning, before breakfast, begged it as a favor of me to march out of his house. I followed his counsel as proudly as you please, and betook me to a church belonging to the fathers of St. Dominic, where, while mass was performing, an old beggar accosted me on the usual topic of alms. I dropped some small change into his hat, which was truly the orphan's mite, saying, at the same time, My friend, remember in your prayers to mention a situation for me; if your petition is heard with favor, it shall be all the better for you; hearty thanks and a handsome poundage!

At these words, the beggar surveyed me up and down, from head to foot, and answered, in a grave tone, What place would you wish to have? I should like, replied I, to be footman in some family where I should do well. He inquired whether the matter pressed. With all possible importunity, said I; for unless I have the good luck to get settled very soon, the alternative will be horrible; death by the gripe of absolute famine, or a livelihood in the ranks of your fraternity. If the latter were, after

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all, to be your lot, resumed he, it certainly would be rather hard upon you, who have not been brought up to our habits of life; but, with a little use and practice, you would prefer our condition to service, which, partiality apart, is far less respectable than the beggar's vocation. Nevertheless, since you like a menial occupation better than leading a free and independent life like me, you shall have a berth without more ado. Mean as my appearance is, you must not measure my power by it. Meet me here at the same hour to-morrow.

I took care to keep the appointment. Though at the spot before the time, I had not long to wait before the beggar joined me, and told me to follow him. I did so. He led me to a cellar not far from the church, where he resided. We went in together, and sitting down on a long bench, at least a hundred years the worse for wear, the conversation took this turn on his part: A good action, as the proverb says, always meets with its reward; you gave me alms yesterday, and that has determined me to get you a place, which shall be soon done, with a blessing on my endeavors. I know an old Dominican, by name Father Alexis, a holy monk, a ghostly confessor. I have the honor to do all his little odd jobs, performing my task with so much discretion and good faith, that he always lends his interest to me and my friends. I have spoken to him about you, and in such terms as to prepossess him in your favor. You may be introduced to his reverence whenever you please.

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There is not a moment to be lost, said I to the old beggar; let us go to the good monk immediately. The mendicant agreed, and led me by the arm to Father Alexis, whom we found in his room, hard at work, writing spiritual letters. He broke off to talk with me. As it was the wish of the mendicant, he would do all in his power to serve me. Having learned, pursued he, that Signor Balthasar Velasquez is in want of a footboy, I wrote to him this morning on your behalf, and he just sent me for answer, that he would take you without further inquiry on my recommendation. This very day you may call on him from me; he is one of my flock, and my very good friend. Thereupon the monk preached to me for three quarters of an hour on my moral and religious duties, and how to fulfil them in conscience and honor. He enlarged principally on the obligation of serving Velasquez with diligence and devotion, and then assured me that he would take care and keep me in my place, provided my master had no very material fault to find with me.

After having thanked the holy person for his goodness towards me, I left the convent with the beggar, who told me that Signor Balthasar Velasquez was an old woollen-draper, but with much simplicity and good nature in his character. I doubt not, added he, but you will be perfectly comfortable in his house. I begged to know his place of residence, and repaired thither immediately, after promising to make my gratitude manifest as soon as I had taken root in my new soil. I went into a large shop;

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where two fashionable young apprentices were walking up and down, practising new grimaces against the entrance of the next customer. I inquired whether their master was at home, saying that I wanted to speak with him from Father Alexis. At that venerable name they showed me into the counting-house, where their principal was turning over the ledger. I made a low bow, and coming up to him, Sir, said I, Father Alexis ordered me to call here and offer myself as a servant to your honor. Ah! my smart lad, answered he, you are heartily welcome. It is enough that the holy man sent you; and I shall take you in preference to three or four others who have been recommended. It is a clear case; your wages begin from this day.

A very short time in the family convinced me that the head of it was just such a man as he had been described. In point of simplicity he was every thing that could be wished; so exquisite a subject for imposition, that it seemed next to an impossibility not to exercise my craft upon such a handle. He had been a widower four years, and had two children, a son of five-and-twenty, and a daughter in her eleventh year. The girl, brought up by a severe duenna, under the spiritual conduct of Father Alexis, walked in the high road of virtue; but her brother, Gaspard Velasquez, though no pains had been spared to make a good man of him, picked out for himself all the vices of a young profligate. Sometimes he staid away from home two or three days together; and if, on his return, his father ventured to remonstrate

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in the least against his proceedings, Gaspard shut his mouth at once, with a haughty toss of the head and an impertinent answer.

Scipio, said the old man one day, my son is the plague of my life. He is over head and ears in all kinds of debauchery: and yet there is no accounting for it, since his education was by no means neglected. I have given him the very best masters; and my friend Father Alexis has done his utmost to train him up in the way he should go; but there was no breaking him in; Master Gaspard ran restive, and bolted into downright libertinism. You may perhaps tell me that I spared the rod and spoiled the child. Quite otherwise! he was punished whenever the occasion seemed to demand it; for, though good-tempered at bottom, I am not to be played upon. I have even gone so far as to lock him up; but that only made him more headstrong than before. In short, he is one of those impracticable beings, on whom good example, good advice, and a good horse-whip, are equally thrown away. If ever he makes any figure in the world, it must be by a miracle from heaven.

Though my heart was not grievously wrung by the sorrows of this unhappy father, sympathy was expected from me, and I condoled with him accordingly. How much to be pitied you are, sir! said I. Virtues like yours deserve to have been handed down in your progeny. The event is quite the reverse, my good lad, answered he. Heaven heard my prayer, and gave me a son, but converted the bless-

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ing into an affliction. Among other grounds of complaint against Gaspard, I may tell you, in confidence, there is one which gives me a great deal of uneasiness; a vast longing to rob his old father, which he too often finds the means of satisfying, in spite of all my caution. Your predecessor played into his hands, and was turned away in consequence. As for you, I flatter myself that my son will never be able to tamper with your honesty. You will take my side of the question; for doubtless Father Alexis has given you your lesson on that head. You may rest assured of that, said I: for a good long hour did his reverence lecture me on doing your will and pleasure without let or hinderance; but I can assure you there was no need of his saying anything about the matter. I feel within myself a sort of call to serve you faithfully, and I promise to do it with a zeal beyond all the temptations of the world to shake or lessen.

He who only hears one side is in danger of deciding partially. Young Velasquez, a mixture of the fribble and the braggart, concluding from the cut of my countenance that I was made up of mortal frailty, like my predecessor, drew me aside to a snug corner, and there talked to me after this fashion: Now mind what is said to you, my dear fellow; you may think I do not know that you are set as a spy upon me by my father; but take especial care how you proceed, for I can assure you most sincerely, that the office is not without very considerable inconvenience to those who undertake it. If ever I find that you tell tales

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out of school, I will give you such a basting as you never had in your life; but if you will make common cause with me, and a fool of my father, you may buy golden returns of gratitude from your humble servant. Do you wish me to deal with you upon the nail? You shall go snacks in all that we can squeeze out of the old fellow. You have only to take your choice: fall at once into the ranks either of father or son; for neutrals will come worst off, where the contending parties fight for their existence.

Sir, answered I, you make the shoe pinch very tight; it is self-evident that there is nothing for me to do but to enlist under your banners, though in my conscience it seems like a crying sin to betray Signor Velasquez. That is no concern of yours, rejoined Gaspard; he is an old hunks, who wants to keep me under his thumb; a curmudgeon, who refuses me the rights of nature, in refusing to stand to the expenses and repairs of my pleasures; for pleasures are the necessaries of life at five-and-twenty. It is in this point of view that you must form your opinion of my father. If that is the case, so be it, sir, said I; there is no standing against so just a subject of complaint. I am quite at your service to play second fiddle in all your laudable enterprises; but let us take especial care to conceal our good understanding, for fear your faithful, humble servant should be kicked out of doors. It will not be amiss, in my poor opinion, for you to affect an extreme antipathy against me: some good round of abuse would have a very pretty effect; you need not

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be nice; all the blackguard terms in the dictionary will come at your call. Nay, a box on the ear now and then, or a kick on the breech, will break no squares; on the contrary, the more you express your thorough dislike, the more Signor Balthasar will pin his faith upon my sleeve. My cue will be, apparently, to avoid speaking to you if possible. In waiting at table, I shall perform my little attentions to you at arm's length; and whenever your honor may happen to be called over the coals by the shopmen, you must not take it amiss if I abuse you worse than a pickpocket.

As plain as chalk from cheese! cried young Velasquez at this last hint; this is admirable, my friend; at your early age it is uncommon to meet with such a talent for intrigue; I consider it as a most happy omen for my purpose. With such a performer to play up to me, I flatter myself the old codger will be pinched to the bone and left penniless. You really carry your good opinion of me beyond what my merit will justify, said I; some industry may fall to my share, but not such exalted genius. But I shall do my utmost; and if my honest endeavors fail, your candor must find excuses for my imbecility.

It was not long before Gaspard had proof positive that I was to a hair's breadth the very man he wanted; and the following was precisely the first trick I played into his hand. Balthasar's strong box was in the good man's chamber, by his bed-side, a sort of oratory, with a prayer-book always lying upon it. Every time I looked that way, my eyes glistened

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with hope and pleasure; my heart chuckled over the very idea of what might happen: Fair, sweet, cruel box, will you forever be coy to my addresses? May I never experience the heartfelt delight of possessing all your charms for better, for worse? As I went into the room at pleasure, and only Gaspard was warned off the premises, it happened one day that I watched his father. The old gentleman, fancying himself unobserved of human eye, after having opened his treasury and closed it fast again, hid the key behind the hangings. I took an accurate observation of the place, and communicated the discovery to my young master, who said, with an improving hug, Ah! my dear Scipio, what glorious news you bring! Our fortune is made, my dear fellow. I will furnish you with wax; you shall take the impression of the key, and then our business is done. There will be no difficulty in finding a benevolent locksmith in Cordova, where, to do the place justice, there are as many rogues as in any part of Spain.

Well! but why, said I to Gaspard, do you want a false key? We may find our account in the proper one. Yes, answered he; but I am afraid lest my father, through mistrust or whim, should take a fancy to hiding it elsewhere; and the safest way is, to have one of our own. I commended his precaution, and falling in with all his principles, got ready for taking the impression of the key: this was effected one morning early, while my old master was paying a visit to father Alexis, with whom he for the most part held very long conferences. I did not stop

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here, but availed myself of the key to open the strong box, wherein an ample range of large and small bags threw me into the most delightful perplexity imaginable. I did not know which to choose, there was such a family likeness among them; nevertheless, as the fear of being caught did not allow of any long deliberation, I laid hands, hap-hazard, on the largest. Then, locking the box carefully, and putting the key back again behind the hangings, I got away out of the chamber with my booty, and hid it under my bed, in a small closet where I lay.

Having performed this exploit so successfully, I ran back as fast as my legs would carry me to young Velasquez, who was waiting at a house where he had given me notice to meet him, and his delight was extreme at the recital of what I had just done. He was so fully satisfied with me, as to lavish caresses without number, and to offer me thrice, in the fulness of his heart, half the contents of the bag, which I did thrice refuse. No, no, sir, said I; this first bag is yours, and yours only; apply it to your own uses and occasions. I shall return forthwith to the strong box, where, as our lucky stars have contrived it, there is money enough for both of us. Accordingly, three days afterwards I carried off a second bag, containing, like the first, five hundred crowns, of which I would only handle the fourth part, let Gaspard be as pressing as he pleased to force upon me a brotherly division, share and share alike.

As soon as this young man found himself so flush of money, and consequently in a condition to gratify

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his hankering after women and play, he gave himself up entirely to the devices of his own imagination; nay, his evil genius pursued him so far as to make him fall desperately in love with one of those female harpies, who devour without remorse or intermission, and swallow up the largest fortunes. His disbursements at her instigation were frightful; and thus it became necessary for me to pay so many visits to the strong box, that old Velasquez at length found out he had been robbed. Scipio, said he one morning, I must give you a piece of information; some one robs me, my friend; my strong box has been opened; several bags have been taken out; that is a certain fact. Whom ought I to accuse of this theft? or rather, who else but my son can have committed it? Gaspard must have got by stealth into my chamber, or else you yourself must have played booty with him; for I am tempted to believe you are in league with him, though to outward appearance you do not set up your horses together. And yet I am unwilling to harbor that suspicion, because Father Alexis undertook to answer for your honesty. I gave him to understand that, by the blessing of heaven on a good natural disposition, my neighbors' goods had no temptation in my sight; and I so happily suited the action to the lie, and the lie to the action, that my judge pronounced a verdict of acquittal on the evidence of grimace and hypocrisy.

Accordingly the old man dropped the subject; but for all that, there was a general misgiving in his breast, and it would sometimes light upon me: tak-

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ing precautions, therefore, against our further attacks, he had a new lock put to his strong box, and always carried the key in his pocket. By these means, an embargo being laid on our traffic with the bags, we looked excessively foolish, especially Gaspard, who, being unable any longer to keep his nymph in her usual style, knew very well that he was likely to be tossed out of her window. He had, however, invention enough to devise an expedient for keeping his head above water a few days longer; and that was neither more nor less than to get into his clutches, in the form of a loan, my dividend on the joint stock of the strong box. I refunded to the last farthing; and this restitution, it is to be hoped, may be set off as an anticipated act of justice to the old draper, in the person of his heir.

The young man, having exhausted this scanty supply, and desperate of any other, fell into a deep melancholy, and into ultimate derangement. He no longer looked on his father in any other light than as the bane of his life. His frenzy broke out into the most dreadful projects; so that, without listening to the voice of consanguinity or nature, the wretch conceived the impious design of poisoning him. He was not content with making me privy to the atrocious design, but even proposed to render me the instrument of parricide. At the very thought, my blood ran cold within me. Sir, said I, is it possible that you are so rejected of heaven as to have formed this horrid plot? What! is it in your nature to murder the author of your existence? Shall Spain,

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the favored abode of the Christian faith, bear witness to the commission of a crime, at the first blush of which transatlantic savages would recoil with horror? No, my dear master, added I, throwing myself on my knees, no, you will not be guilty of an action which would raise the hand of all mankind against you, and be overtaken by an infamous punishment.

I pressed many arguments beside on Gaspard, to dissuade him from so fearful an enterprise. How the deuce I came by all the moral and religious topics which I brought to act against the fortress of his despair, is more than I can account for; but it is certain that I preached like a doctor of Salamanca, though a mere stripling, born of a gypsy fortune-teller. And yet it was to no purpose that I suggested the duty of communing with his own better resolutions, and stoutly wrestling with the fiend who was lying in wait for his immortal soul; my pious eloquence was dissipated into air. His head hung sullenly on his bosom, and his tongue uttered no sound, in answer to all my mollifying exhortations, so that there was every reason to conclude he would not swerve from his purpose.

Hereupon, taking my own measures, I requested a private interview with my old master; and being closeted with him, Sir, said I, allow me to throw myself at your feet, and to implore your pity. In pathetic accord with my moving accents, I prostrated myself before him, with my face all bathed in tears. The merchant, surprised at what he saw and heard, asked the cause of my distress. Remorse of conscience

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and repentance, answered I; but neither repentance nor remorse can ever wash out my guilt. I have been weak enough to give ear to your son, and to be his accomplice in robbing you. To this confession I added a sincere acknowledgment of all that had happened, with the particulars of my late conversation with Gaspard, whose design I laid open without the least reserve.

Bad as was the opinion which old Velasquez entertained of his son, he could scarcely believe his ears. Nevertheless, finding no good reason to distrust the truth of my account, Scipio, said he, raising me from the ground, where I had till now been prostrate at his feet, I forgive you in consideration of the important notice you have communicated. Gaspard! pursued he, raising his voice up to the loudness of anguish, does Gaspard aim a blow at my life? Ah! ungrateful son, unnatural monster! better thou hadst never been born, or stifled at thy birth, than to have been reared for the destruction of thy father! What plea, what object, what palliation of the atrocious deed? I furnished thee annually with a reasonable allowance for thy pleasures, and what wouldst thou have more? Must I have drained my fortune to the dregs to support thee in thy extravagance? Having vented his feelings in this bitter apostrophe, he enjoined secrecy on me, and told me to leave him alone, while he considered how to act in so delicate a conjuncture.

I was very anxious to know what resolution this unhappy father would take, when on that very day he sent for Gaspard, and addressed him thus, with-

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out betraying the inward emotions of his heart: My son, I have received a letter from Merida, purporting that if you are disposed to marry, you may make a match with a very fine girl of fifteen, with a handsome fortune in her pocket. If you have not forsworn that happy and holy estate, we will set out to-morrow morning by daybreak for Merida: you will see the lady in question, and if she hits your fancy, the business may soon be settled. Gaspard, pricking up his ears at a handsome fortune, and already fingering the cash by anticipation, answered unhesitatingly that he was ready to undertake the journey; and accordingly they departed the following day at sunrise, without attendants, mounted on good mules.

Having reached the mountains of Fesira, in a delightful spot for the operations of banditti, but terror-stirring to the timid souls of travellers, Balthasar dismounted, and desired his son to do likewise. The young man obeyed, but expressed his surprise at such a requisition, in so lonely a place. I will tell you the reason presently, answered the old man, darting at him a look of mingled grief and anger: We are not going to Merida; and the alleged courtship was only an invention of mine, for the purpose of drawing you hither. I am not ignorant, ungrateful and unnatural son, I am not uninformed of your meditated crime. I am aware that a poison, prepared by your hands, was to have been administered to me; but, mad as you are, could it enter into your contemplation that my life could have been invaded

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with impunity by such means? How fatally mistaken! Your crime would soon have been detected, and you would have perished under the hands of the executioner. There is a safer way of glutting your fell malice, without exposing yourself to an ignominious death; we are here without witnesses, and in a place where daily murders are perpetrated; since you are so thirsty after my blood, plunge your dagger into my bosom: the assassination will naturally be laid at the door of some banditti. After these words, Balthasar, laying his breast bare, and pointing to his heart, ended with this challenge: Here, Gaspard, strike deep enough, strike home; make me pay that forfeit for having engendered such a disgrace to human nature, and no more than what is due to so monstrous a production.

Young Velasquez, struck by this reproach as by a thunderbolt, far from pleading in his own justification, fell instantly lifeless at his father's feet. The good old man, hailing the germ of repentance in this unfeigned testimony of shame, could not help yielding to paternal weakness; he made all possible haste to give his assistance; but Gaspard had no sooner recovered the use of his senses, than, unable to stand in the presence of a father so justly offended, he made an effort to raise himself from the ground, then sprang upon his mule, and galloped out of sight without saying one word. Balthasar suffered him to take his own course, and returned to Cordova, little doubting but conscience would play its part in revenging his wrongs. Six months afterwards it appeared that

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the culprit had thrown himself into the Carthusian convent at Seville, there to pass the remnant of his days in penance.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION OF SCIPIO'S STORY.

Bad example sometimes produces the converse of itself. The behavior of young Velasquez made me think seriously on my own predicament. I began to wrestle with my thievish propensities, and to live like one of the better sort. A confirmed habit of pouncing upon money wherever I could get it, had been contracted by such a long succession of individual acts, that it was no easy matter to say where it should stop. And yet I was in hopes to accomplish my own reformation, under the idea that to become virtuous, a man had nothing to do but to contract the desire of being so. I therefore undertook this great work, and heaven seemed to smile upon my efforts. I left off eying the old draper's strong box with the carnal regard of avaricious longing: nay, I verily believe, that if it had depended on my own will and pleasure to have turned over the contents to my own use, I should have abstained from the crime of picking and stealing. It must, however, be admitted, that it would have been an unadvisable measure to tempt my new-born integrity with meats too strong for its stomach; and Velasquez was nurse enough to keep me on a proper diet.

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Don Manriquez de Medrano, a young gentleman, knight of Alcantara, was in the habit of coming backwards and forwards to our house. He was a customer, one of our principal in point of rank, if not punctual in point of pay. I had the happiness to find favor with this knight, who never met me without that sort of notice which encouraged conversation, and with that conversation he appeared always to be very much pleased. Scipio, said he, one day, if I had a footman of your kidney, it would be as good as a fortune to me; and if you were not in the service of a man who stands so high in my regards, I should make no scruple about enticing you away. Sir, answered I, you would have very little trouble in succeeding; for I am distractedly partial to people of fashion; it is my weak side; their free and easy manners fascinate me to the extreme of folly. That being the case, replied Don Manriquez, I will at once beg Signor Balthasar to turn you over from his household to mine: he will scarcely refuse me such a request. Accordingly Velasquez was kind and complying, with so much the less violence to his own private feelings, as there seemed no reason to think, that if a man parted with one knavish servant, he might not easily get another in his place. To me the change was all for the better, since a tradesman's service appeared but a beggarly condition, in comparison with the office of own man to a knight of Alcantara.

To draw a faithful likeness of my new master, I must describe him as a gentleman possessing every

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requisite of person, figure, manners, and disposition. Nor was that all; for his courage and honor were equal to his other qualities: the goods of fortune were the only good things he wanted; but being the younger son of a family more distinguished by descent than opulence, he was obliged to draw for his expenses on an old aunt living at Toledo, who loved him as her own child, and administered to his occasions with affectionate liberality. He was always well dressed, and everywhere well received. He visited the principal ladies in the city, and among others the Marchioness of Almenara. She was a widow of seventy-two, but the centre of attraction to all the fashionable society of Cordova, by the elegance of her manners and the sprightliness of her conversation: men as well as women laid themselves out for an introduction, because her parties conferred at once on the frequenters the patent of good company.

My master was one of that lady's most assiduous courtiers. After leaving her one evening, his spirits seemed to be more elevated than was natural to him. Sir, said I, you are evidently in a good deal of agitation; may your faithful servant ask on what account? Has anything happened out of the common way? The young gallant smiled at so home a question, and owned candidly that he had just been engaged in a serious conversation with the Marchioness of Almenara. I will lay a wager, said I, laughing outright, that this moppet of threescore and ten, this girl in her second childhood, has been unfolding to you all the secret movements of a tender,

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susceptible heart. Do not make a jest of it, answered he; for the fact is, my friend, that the marchioness is seriously in love with me. She told me that the narrowness of my circumstances was as well known to her as the nobility of my birth; that she had taken a liking to me, and was determined to place me at my ease by marriage, since she could not decently lay her fortune at my feet on any other terms. That this marriage would expose her to public ridicule, she professed to have considered; that scandal would be busy at her expense; in short, that she should pass for an old fool with an ambitious eye and a lickerish constitution. No matter for that! She was not to be awed from the career of her humor by quips and sentences: her only alarm was, lest I should either make sport of her intentions, or torment her more grievously by my aversion.

Such, continued the knight, was the substance of the marchioness's declaration, and I am the more astonished at it because she is the most prudent and sensible woman in Cordova; wherefore I answered by expressing my surprise at her honoring me with the offer of her hand, since she had hitherto persisted in her resolution of remaining in a state of widowhood. To this she replied, that having a considerable fortune, it would give her pleasure to share it in her lifetime with a man of honor to whom she was attached. To all appearance, then, rejoined I, you have made up your mind to take a lover's leap. Can you doubt about that? answered he. The marchioness is immensely rich, with excellent quali-

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ties both of head and heart. It would be the extreme of folly and fastidiousness to let so advantageous a settlement slip through my fingers.

I entirely approved my master's purpose of profiting by so fine an opportunity to make his fortune, and even advised him to bring the matter to a short issue, for fear of a change in the wind. Happily the lady had the business more at heart than myself; her orders were given so effectually, that the necessary forms and ceremonies were soon got over. When it became known in Cordova that the old Marchioness of Almenara was getting herself ready to be the bride of young Don Manriquez de Medrano, the wits began breaking their odd quirks and remnants in derision of the widow; but though she heard her own detractions, she did not put them to mending; the town might talk as they pleased; for when she said she would die a widow, she did not think to live till she were married. The wedding was solemnized with a publicity and splendor which furnished fresh food for evil tongues. The bride, said they, might at least have had the modesty to dispense with noise and ostentation, so unbecoming in an old widow who marries a young husband.

The marchioness, far enough from yielding to the suggestions of shame at her own inconsistency, or the disparity of their ages, yielded herself up without constraint to the expression of the most lively joy. She gave a grand concert and supper, with a ball afterwards, and invited all the principal families in Cordova. Just before the close of the ball, the

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new-married couple disappeared, and were shown to an apartment, where, with no other witnesses but her own maid and myself, she spoke to my master in these terms: Don Manriquez, this is your apartment; mine is in another part of the house: we will pass the night in separate rooms, and will live together by day like mother and son. At first the knight did not know what to make of this; he thought that the lady was only trying his temper, as if her coldness must be wooed to kindness, and her love, like her pardon, not unsought, be won. Imagining, therefore, that good manners required, at least, the show of passion, he made his advances, and offered, according to the laws of amorous suit enacted in such cases, to assist in the disencumbering duties of her toilet; but, so far from allowing him to interfere with the province of her servant, she pushed him back with a serious air, saying, Hold, Don Manriquez; if you take me for one of those sweet-toothed old women who marry a second time from mere incontinence, you do me a manifest injustice: my proposals were not fraught with conditions of hard service as the tenure of our nuptial contract; the gift of my heart was unmixed with sensual dross, and your gratitude is only drawn upon for returns of pure and platonic friendship. After this explanation, she left my master and me in our apartment, and withdrew to her own with her attendant, forbidding the bridegroom, in the most positive manner, to attempt retiring with her.

After her departure, it was some time before we

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recovered from our surprise at what we had just heard. Scipio, said my master, could you ever have believed that the marchioness would have talked in such a strain? What think you of so philosophic a bride? I think, sir, answered I, that she is a phœnix among the brood of hymen. It is for all the world like a good living without parochial duties. For my part, replied Don Manriquez, there is nothing so much to my taste as a wife of modest pretensions; and I mean to make her amends for the trophy she has raised to unadulterated esteem by all the delicate attentions in my power to pay. We kept up the subject of the lady's moderation till it was full time to separate. My quarters were fixed in an anteroom with a book-case bedstead; my master's in an elegant bed-chamber with every appurtenance except one: but however necessary it might be to play the disappointed bridegroom, I am much mistaken if in the bottom of his soul he was half so much afraid of sleeping by himself as of being encumbered with a bedfellow.

The rejoicings began again on the following day, and the bride was so jocund on the occasion, that the bolts of the fools among her visitors were not soon shot. She was the first to laugh at all their pointless jokes; nay, she even set the little wits to work, by giving them an example of pleasantry, which they were very little able to follow. The happy man, on his part, seemed to be very little less happy than his partner; and one would have sworn, judging by the glance of satisfaction which accom-

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panied his language and deportment, that he liked mutton better than lamb. This well-matched pair had a second conversation in the evening; and then it was decided that, without interfering in the least with one another, they should live together just on the same footing as they had lived before marriage. At all events, much credit must be given to Don Manriquez on one account: he did, from delicate consideration towards his wife, what few husbands would have done under his circumstances, for he discarded a little seamstress of whom he was very fond, and who was very fond of him, because he did not choose to keep up a connection insulting to the feelings of a lady so studious of his.

While he was furnishing such unusual testimonies of gratitude to his elderly benefactress, she overpaid and doubly paid her debt of obligation, even without diving into its nature or extent. She gave him the master key of her strong box, which was better provided than that of Velasquez. Though she had reduced her establishment during widowhood, it was now replaced upon the same footing as in the lifetime of her first husband; the complement of household servants was enlarged, the stud and equipages were in the very first style; in a word, by her generosity and kindness, the most beggarly knight belonging to the order of Alcantara became the most moneyed member of the fraternity. You may perhaps be disposed to ask me how much I was in pocket by all that; and my answer is, fifty pistoles from my mistress, and a hundred from my master, who, moreover,

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appointed me his secretary, with a salary of four hundred crowns; nay, his confidence was so unbounded, that I was fixed on to fill the office of treasurer.

Treasurer! cried I, interrupting Scipio at the very idea, and bursting into an immoderate fit of laughter. Yes, sir, replied he, with a cool, unflinching seriousness; you are perfectly right — treasurer was the word; and I may venture to say that the duties of the office were executed without the slightest occasion for a committee of inquiry. True it is that the balance may be somewhat against me, for I was always in the habit of overdrawing my wages; and as the firm was dissolved somewhat suddenly, it is by no means impossible that the balance of my cash account might be on the wrong side: but, at all events, it was my last slip; and since that time my ways have been ways of uprightness and honesty.

Thus was I, continued this son of a gypsy, secretary and treasurer to Don Manriquez, who, to all appearance, was as happy in me as I in him, when he received a letter from Toledo, announcing that his aunt, Donna Theodora Moscoso, was on her last legs. He was so much affected by the news as to set out instantly and pay his duty to that lady, who had been more than a mother to him for several years. I attended him on the journey with only two under-servants; we were all mounted on the best horses in the stable, and reached Toledo without loss of time, where we found Donna Theodora in a state to warrant our hopes that she would not, at present,

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weigh anchor on her outward-bound voyage; and, in fact, our judgment on her case, though point blank in contradiction to that of an old physician who attended her, proved by the event that we knew at least as much of the matter as he did.

While the health of our venerable relative was improving from day to day, less, perhaps, from the effect of the prescriptions than in consequence of her dear nephew's presence, your worthy friend the treasurer passed his time in the pleasantest manner possible, with some young people whose acquaintance was admirably calculated to ventilate the confined cash in his pocket. Sometimes they enticed me to the tennis-court, and took me in for a game: on those occasions, not being quite so steady a player as my master Don Abel, I lost much oftener than I won. By degrees play became a passion with me; and if the taste had been suffered to gain complete possession, it would doubtless have laid me under the necessity of drawing bills of accommodation on the family bank; but happily love stepped in, and saved the credit both of the bank and of my principles. One day, passing along near the church of the Epiphany, I espied, through a lattice with the drapery drawn up, a young girl who might well be called a thing divine, for nothing natural was ever seen so lovely. I would lay on my compliment still thicker, if words were not wanting to express the effect of her first appearance upon my mind. I set my wits to work, and by dint of diligent inquiry, learned that her name was Beatrice, and that she was waiting-

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maid to Donna Julia, younger daughter of the Count de Polan.

Beatrice broke in upon the thread of Scipio's story by laughing immoderately: then, directing her speech to my wife, Charming Antonia, said she, do but just look at me, I beseech you, and then say truly whether I could be likened to a thing divine. You might at that time, to my enamoured sight, said Scipio; and, since your conjugal faith is no longer under a cloud, my visual appetite increases by what it feeds on. It was a pretty compliment! and my secretary, having fired it off, pursued his narrative as follows:—

This intelligence kindled the flame of passion within me; but not, it must be confessed, a flame which could be acknowledged without a blush. I took it for granted that my triumph over her scruples would be easy, if my biddings were high enough to command the ordinary market of female chastity; but Beatrice was a pearl beyond price. In vain did I solicit her, through the channel of some intriguing gossips, with the offer of my purse and of my most tender attentions; she rejected all my proposals with disdain. I had recourse to the lover's last remedy, and offered her my hand, which she deigned to accept on the strength of my being secretary and treasurer to Don Manriquez. As it seemed expedient to keep our marriage secret for some time, the ceremony was performed privately, in presence of Dame Lorenza Sephora, Seraphina's governess, and before some others of the Count de Polan's household. After our happy union, Beatrice contrived the means

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of our meeting by day, and passing some part of every night together in the garden, whither I repaired through a little gate of which she gave me a key. Never were man and wife better pleased with each other than Beatrice and myself: with equal impatience did we watch for the hour of our appointment; with congenial emotions of eager sensibility did we hasten to the spot, and the moments which we passed together, though countless from their number in the calendar of cold indifference, to us were few and fleeting, in comparison with that eternity of mutual bliss for which we panted.

One night, a night which should be expunged from the almanac, a night of darkness and despair, contrasted with the brightness of all our former nights, I was surprised, on approaching the garden, to find the little gate open. This unusual circumstance alarmed me; for it seemed to augur something inauspicious to my happiness: I turned pale and trembled, as if with a foreknowledge of what was going to happen. Advancing in the dark towards a bower, where our private meetings had usually taken place, I heard a man's voice. I stopped on the instant to listen, when the following words struck like the sound of death upon my ear: Do not keep me languishing in suspense, my dear Beatrice; make my happiness complete, and consider that your own fortunes are closely connected with mine. Instead of having patience to hear further, it seemed as if more had been said than blood could expiate; that devil, jealousy, took possession of my soul; I drew my

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sword, and breathing only vengeance, rushed into the bower. Ah! base seducer, cried I, whoever you are, you shall tear this heart from out my breast, rather than touch my honor on its tenderest point. With these words on my lips, I attacked the gentleman who was talking with Beatrice. He stood upon his guard without more ado, like a man much better acquainted with the science of arms than myself, who had only received a few lessons from a fencing-master at Cordova. And yet, strong as his sword-arm was, I made a thrust which he could not parry; or, what is more likely, his foot slipped: I saw him fall; and, fancying that I had wounded him mortally, ran away as hard as my legs would carry me, without deigning to answer Beatrice, who would have called me back.

Yes, indeed! said Scipio's wife, resolved to have her share in the development of the story; I called out for the purpose of undeceiving him. The gentleman conversing with me in the arbor was Don Ferdinand de Leyva. This nobleman, who was in love with my mistress Julia, had laid a plan for running away with her, from despair of being able to obtain her hand by any other means; and I had myself made this assignation with him in the garden, to concert measures for the elopement, and with his fortune he assured me that my own was closely linked; but it was in vain that I screamed after my husband; he darted from me as if my very touch were contamination.

In such a state of mind, resumed Scipio, I was

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capable of anything. Those who know by experience what jealousy is, into what extravagance it drives the best regulated spirits, will be at no loss to conceive the disorder it must have produced in my weak brain. I passed in a moment from one extreme to another: emotions of hatred succeeded instantaneously to all my former sentiments of affection for my wife. I took an oath never to see her more, and to banish her forever from my memory. Besides, the supposed death of a man lay upon my conscience; and, under that idea, I was afraid of falling into the hands of justice; so that every torment which could be accumulated on the head of guilt and misery by the fury of despair and the demon of remorse, was the remediless companion of my wretched flight. In this dreadful situation, thinking only of my escape, I returned home no more, but immediately quitted Toledo, with no other provision for my journey but the clothes on my back. It is true I had about sixty pistoles in my pocket—a tolerable supply for a young man whose views in life pointed no higher than a good service.

I walked forward all night, or rather ran, for the phantom of an alguazil always dogging me at the heels made me perform wonders of pedestrian activity. The dawn overtook me between Rodillas and Maqueda. When I was at the latter town, finding myself a little weary, I went into the church which was just opened, and having put up a short prayer, sat down on a bench to rest. I began musing on the state of my affairs, which were sufficiently out

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at elbows to require all my skill in patchwork; but the time for reflection, as well as for repentance, was cut short. The church echoed on a sudden with three or four smacks of a whip, which made me conclude that some carrier was on the road. I immediately got up to go and see whether I was right or wrong. At the door, I found a man, mounted on a mule, leading two others by the halter. Stop, my friend, said I: whither are those two mules going? To Madrid, answered he. I came hither with two good Dominicans, and am now setting out on my return.

Such an opportunity of going to Madrid gave me an itching desire for the expedition: I made my bargain with the muleteer, jumped upon one of his mules, and away we scampered towards Illescas, where we were to put up for the night. Scarcely were we out of Maqueda, before the muleteer, a man from five-and-thirty to forty, began chanting the church service with a most collegiate twang. This trial of his lungs began with matins, in the drowsy tone of a canon between asleep and awake; then he roared out the Belief, alternately in contralto, tenor, and bass, in all the harmonious confusion of high mass; and not content with that, he rang the bell for vespers, without sparing me a single petition, or so much as a bar of the *Magnificat*. Though the scoundrel almost cracked the drum of my ear, I could not help laughing heartily; and even egged him on to make the welkin reverberate with his hallelujahs, when the anthem was suspended a few rests,

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for the necessary purpose of supplying wind to the organ. Courage, my friend! said I; go on and prosper. If heaven has given you a good capacious throat, you are neither a niggard nor a perverter of its precious boon. O! certainly not, for the matter of that, cried he: happily for my immortal soul, I am not like carriers in general, who sing nothing but profane songs about love or drinking: I do not even defile my lips with ballads on our wars against the Moors; such subjects are at least light and unedifying, if not licentious and impure. You have, replied I, an evangelical purity of heart, which belongs only to the elect among muleteers. With this excessive squeamishness of yours about the choice of your music, have you also taken a vow of continence, wherever there is a young bar-maid to be picked up at an inn? Assuredly, rejoined he, chastity is also a virtue by which it is my pride to ward off the temptations of the road, where my only business is to look after my mules. I was in no small degree astonished at such pious sentiments from this prodigy of psalm-singing mule-drivers; so that, looking upon him as a man above the vanities and corruptions of this nether world, I fell into chat with him after he had gone the length of his tether in singing.

We got to Illescas late in the day. On entering the inn-yard, I left the care of the mules to my companion, and went into the kitchen, where I ordered the landlord to get us a good supper, which he promised to perform so much to my satisfaction as to make me remember all the days of my life what

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usage travellers meet with at his house. As, added he, now only ask your carrier what sort of a man I am. By all the powers of seasoning! I would defy the best cook in Madrid or Toledo to make an olio at all to be compared to mine. I shall treat you this evening with some stewed rabbit after a receipt of my own; you will then see whether it is any boast to say that I know how to send up a supper. Thereupon, showing me a stewpan with a young rabbit, as he said, cut up into pieces, There, continued he, is what I mean to favor you with. When I shall have thrown in a little pepper, some salt, wine, a handful of sweet herbs, and a few other ingredients which I keep for my own sauces, you may depend on sitting down to such a dish as would not disgrace the table of a chancellor or an archbishop.

The landlord, having thus done justice to his own merits, began to work upon the materials he had prepared. While he was laboring in his vocation, I went into a room, where, lying down on a sort of couch, I fell fast asleep through fatigue, having taken no rest the night before. In the space of about two hours, the muleteer came and awakened me, with the information that supper was ready, and a pressing request to take my place at table. The cloth was laid for two, and we sat down to the hashed rabbit. I played my knife and fork most manfully, finding the flavor delicious, whether from the force of hunger in communicating a candid mode of interpretation to my palate, or from the natural effect of the ingredients compounded by the cook. A joint of

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roast mutton was next served up. It was remarkable that the carrier only paid his respects to this last article; and I asked him why he had not taken his share of the other. He answered, with a suppressed smile, that he was not fond of made dishes. This reason, or rather the turn of countenance with which it was alleged, seemed to imply more than was expressed. You have not told me, said I, the real meaning of your not eating the fricassee; do have the goodness to explain it at once. Since you are so curious to be made acquainted with it, replied he, I must own that I have an insuperable aversion to cramming my stomach with meats in masquerade, since one evening at an inn on the road between Toledo and Cuença, they served me up, instead of a wild rabbit, a hash of tame cat; enough, of all conscience, ever after to set my intestines in battle array against all minces, stews, and force-meats.

No sooner had the muleteer let me into this secret, than, in spite of the hunger which raged within me, my appetite left me completely in the lurch. I conceived, in all the horrors of extreme loathing, that I had been eating a cat dressed up as the double of a rabbit; and the fricassee had no longer any power over my senses, except by producing a strong inclination to retch. My companion did not lessen my tendency that way, by telling me that the innkeepers in Spain, as well as the pastry-cooks, were very much in the habit of making that substitution. The drift of the conversation was, as you may perceive, very much in the nature of a lenitive to my stomach; so

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much so, that I had no mind to meddle any more with the dish of undefinables, nor even to make an attack upon the roast meat, for fear the mutton should have performed its duty by deputy as well as the rabbit. I jumped up from table, cursing the cookery, the cook, and the whole establishment; then, throwing myself down upon the sofa, I passed the night with less nausea than might reasonably have been expected. The day following, with the dawn, after having paid the reckoning with as princely an air as if we had been treated like princes, away went I from Illescas, bearing my faculties so strongly impregnated with fricassee, that I took every animal which crossed the road, of whatever species or dimensions, for a cat.

We got to Madrid betimes, where I had no sooner settled with my carrier, than I hired a ready-furnished lodging near the Sun-gate. My eyes, though accustomed to the great world, were, nevertheless, dazzled by the concourse of nobility which was ordinarily seen in the quarter of the court. I admired the prodigious number of carriages, and the countless list of gentlemen, pages, gentlemen's gentlemen, and plain, downright footmen, in the train of the grandees. My admiration exceeded all bounds on going to the king's levee, and beholding the monarch in the midst of his court. The effect of the scene was enchanting, and I said to myself, It is no wonder they should say that one must see the court of Madrid, to form an adequate idea of its magnificence: I am delighted to have directed my course hither, and feel a sort of prescience within me that I shall not come away

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without taking fortune by surprise. I caught nothing napping, however, but my own prudence, in making some thriftless, expensive acquaintance. My money oozed away in the rapid thaw of my propriety and better judgment, so that it became a measure of expedient degradation to throw away my transcendent merit on a pedagogue of Salamanca, whom some family lawsuit or other concern had brought to Madrid, where he was born, and where chance, more whimsical than wise, thrust me within the horizon of his knowledge. I became his right hand, his prime, principal agent, and dogged him at the heels to the university when he returned thither.

My new employer went by the name of Don Ignacio de Ipigna. He furnished himself with the handle of don, inasmuch as he had been tutor to a nobleman of the first rank, who had recompensed his early services with an annuity for life: he likewise derived a snug little salary from his professorship in the university; and, in addition to all this, laid the public under a yearly contribution of two or three hundred pistoles for books of uninstructive morality, which he protruded from the press periodically by weight and measure. The manner in which he worked up the shreds and patches of his composition deserves a notice somewhat more than cursory. The heavy hours of the forenoon were spent in muzzing over Hebrew, Greek, and Latin authors, and in writing down upon little squares of card every pithy sentence or striking thought which occurred in the morning's reading. According to the progress of

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this literary Pam in winning tricks from the ancients, he employed me to score up his honors in the form of an Apollo's wreath: these metaphysical garlands were strung upon wire, and each garland made a pocket volume. What an execrable hash of wholesome viands did we cook up! The commandments set at loggerheads with an utter confusion of tables; Epicurean conclusions grafted on stoical premises! Tully quoting Epictetus, and Seneca supporting his antitheses on the authority of monkish rhyme! Scarcely a month elapsed without our putting forth at least two volumes, so that the press was kept continually groaning under the weight of our transgressions. What seemed most extraordinary of all was, that these literary larcenies were palmed upon the purchasers for spick and span new wares, and if, by any strange and improbable chance, a thick-headed critic should stumble with his noddle smack against some palpable plagiarism, the author would plead guilty to the indictment, and make a merit of serving up at second-hand

> What Gellius or Stobæus hashed before,
> Though chewed by blind old scholiasts o'er and o'er.

He was also a great commentator, and filled his notes chuck full of so much erudition as to multiply whole pages of discussion upon what homely common-sense would have consigned to the brief alternative of a query: —

> Disputes of Me or Te, or Aut or At,
> To sound or sink in cano O or A,
> Or give up Cicero to C or K.

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As almost every author, ethical and didactic, from Hesiod down to himself, took his turn to dangle on some one or other of our manuscript garlands, it was impossible for me not to suck in somewhat of sage nurture from so copious a stream of philosophy: it would be rank ingratitude to shift off my obligation. My handwriting also became strictly and decidedly legible, by dint of continual transcription; my estate was more that of a pupil than of a servant, and my morals were not neglected, while my mind was polished, and my faculties raised above their former level. Scipio, he used to say, when he chanced to hear of any serving lad with more cunning than honesty in his dealings, beware, my good boy, how you take after the evil example of that graceless villain. "The honor of a servant is his fidelity; his highest virtues are submission and obedience. Be studious of thy master's interests; be diligent in his affairs, and faithful to the trust which he reposeth in thee. Thy time and thy labor belong unto him. Defraud him not thereof, for he payeth thee for them." To sum up all, Don Ignacio lost no opportunity of leading me on in the path of virtue, and his prudent counsels sank so deep into my heart, as to keep under anything like even the slightest wish of playing him a rogue's trick during the fifteen months which I spent in his service.

I have already mentioned that Doctor de Ipigna was a native of Madrid. He had a relation there, by name Catalina, waiting-maid to the lady who officiated as nurse to the heir-apparent. This abi-

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gail, the same through whose intervention I got Signor de Santillane released from the tower of Segovia, intent on rendering a service to Don Ignacio, prevailed with her mistress to petition the Duke of Lerma for some preferment. The minister named him for the archdeaconry of Grenada, which, as a conquered country, is in the king's gift. We repaired immediately to Madrid on receiving the intelligence, as the doctor wished to thank his patronesses before he took possession of his benefice. I had more than one opportunity of seeing Catalina, and conversing with her. The cheerful turn of my temper and a certain easy air of good company were altogether to her taste; for my part, I found her so much to my liking, that I could not help saying yes to the little advances of partiality which she made in my favor: in short, we got to feel very kindly towards each other. You must not write a comment with your nails, my dear Beatrice, on this episode in the romance of my amours, because I was firmly persuaded of your inconstancy, and you will allow that heresy, though impious, being also blind, my penance may reasonably be remitted on sincere conversion.

In the mean time, Doctor Ignacio was making ready to set out for Grenada. His relation and myself, out of our wits at the impending separation, had recourse to an expedient which rescued us from its horrors: I shammed illness, complained of my head, complained of my chest, and made a characteristic wry face for every pain and ache in the cata-

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logue of human infirmities. My master called in a physician, who told me with a grave face, after putting his questions in the usual course, that my complaint was of a much more serious nature than it might appear to unprofessional observation, and that, according to all present likelihood, I should keep my chamber a long time. The doctor, impatient to take possession of his preferment, did not think it quite so well to delay his departure, but chose rather to hire another boy; he therefore contented himself with handing me over to the care of a nurse, with whom he left a sum of money to bury me if I should die, or to remunerate me for my services if I should recover.

As soon as I knew Don Ignacio to be safe on the road for Granada, I was cured of all my maladies. I got up, made my final bow to the physician who had evinced so thorough a knowledge of my case, and fairly turned my nurse out of doors, who made her retreat good with baggage and ammunition to the amount of more than half the sum for which she ought to have accounted with me. While I was enacting the sick man, Catalina was playing another part about the person of her mistress, Donna Anna de Guévra, into whose conception having, by dint of many a wordy process, inserted the notion that I was the man of all others ready cut and dry for an intrigue, she induced her to choose me for one of her agents. The royal and most catholic nurse, whose genius for great undertakings was either produced or exasperated by the love of great possessions, having occasion for suitable ministers, received me among

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her hangers-on, and lost no opportunity of ascertaining how far I was for her purpose. She confided some commissions to my care, which, vanity apart, called for no little address, and what they called for was ready at hand: accordingly she gave me all possible credit for the diligent execution of my office, while my discontent swelled high against her for fobbing me off with the cold recompense of approbation. The good lady was so abominably avaricious as not to give me a working partner's share in the profits of my industry, nor to allow for the wear and tear of my conscience. She seemed inclined to consider, that, by paying me my wages, all the requisitions of Christian charity were made good between us. This excess of illiberal economy would soon have parted us, had it not been for the fascination of Catalina's gentle virtues, who became more desperately in love with me from day to day, and completed the paroxysm by a formal proposal of marriage.

Fair and softly, my pretty friend, said I: we must look before we leap into that bottomless gulf: the first point to be settled is to ascertain the death of a young woman who obtained the refusal before you, and made me supremely happy for no other purpose but to anticipate the purgatory of an intermediate state in the present. All a mere sham, a put-off! answered Catalina: you swear you are married only by way of throwing a genteel veil over your abhorrence of my person and manners. In vain did I call all the powers to witness that what I said was solemnly true: my sincere avowal was considered as

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a mere copy of my countenance; the lady was grievously offended, and changed her whole behavior in regard to me. There was no downright quarrel; but our tender intercourse became visibly more rigid and unaccommodating, so that nothing further took place between us but cold formality and commonplace attentions.

Just at the nick of time, I heard that Signor Gil Blas de Santillane, secretary to the prime minister of the Spanish monarchy, wanted a servant; and the situation was the more flattering, as it bore the bell among all the vacancies of the court register office. Signor de Santillane, they told me, was one of the first men, high in favor with the Duke of Lerma, and consequently in the direct road to fortune: his heart, too, was cast in the mould of generosity: by doing his business, you most assuredly did your own. The opportunity was too good to be neglected: I went and offered myself to Signor Gil Blas, to whom I felt my heart grow from the first; for my sentiments were fixed by the turn of his physiognomy. There could be no question about leaving the royal and most catholic nurse for him; and it is to be hoped I shall never have any other master.

Here ended Scipio's story. But he continued speaking, and addressed himself to me. Signor de Santillane, do me the favor to assure these ladies that you have always known me for a faithful and zealous servant. Your testimony will stand me in good stead, and vouch for a sincere reformation in the son of Cosclina.

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Yes, ladies, said I, it is even so. Though Scipio in his childhood was a very scape-grace, he has been born anew, and is now the exact model of a trusty domestic. Far from having any complaints to make against him, my debt is infinite. On the fatal night when I was carried off to the tower of Segovia, he saved my effects from pillage, and refunded what he might have taken to himself with impunity: not contented with rescuing my worldly pelf, he came out of pure friendship and shut himself up with me in my prison, preferring the melancholy sympathies of adverse fortune to all the charms of lusty, buoyant liberty.

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BOOK THE ELEVENTH.

CHAPTER I.

CONTAINING THE SUBJECT OF THE GREATEST JOY THAT GIL BLAS EVER FELT, FOLLOWED UP, AS OUR GREATEST PLEASURES TOO GENERALLY ARE, BY THE MOST MELANCHOLY EVENT OF HIS LIFE. GREAT CHANGES AT COURT, PRODUCING, AMONG OTHER IMPORTANT REVOLUTIONS, THE RETURN OF SANTILLANE.

I HAVE observed already that Antonia and Beatrice understood one another perfectly well; the latter falling meekly and modestly into the trammels of a humble attendant on her lady, and the former taking very kindly to the rank of a mistress and superior. Scipio and myself were husbands too rich in nature's gifts and in the affections of our spouses, not very soon to have the satisfaction of becoming fathers: our lasses were as women wish to be who love their lords, almost at the same moment. Beatrice's time was up first: she was safely delivered of a daughter; and in a few days afterwards Antonia completed the general joy by presenting me with a son. I sent my secretary to Valencia with the welcome tidings: the governor came to Lirias with Seraphina and the Marchioness de Pliego, to be present at the baptismal ceremony; for he made it his pleasure to add this testimony of affection to all his former kindnesses.

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As that nobleman stood godfather, and the Marchioness godmother to my son, he was named Alphonso; and the governor's lady, wishing to draw the bonds of sponsorship still closer in this friendly party, stood for Scipio's daughter, to whom we gave the name of Seraphina.

The rejoicings at the birth of my son were not confined to the mansion-house: the villagers of Lirias celebrated the event by festivities, which were meant as a grateful token, to prove how much the little neighborhood partook in all the satisfactions of their landlord. But alas! our carousals were of short continuance; or, to speak more suitably to the subject, they were turned into weeping, wailing, and lamentation, by a catastrophe which more than twenty years have not been sufficient to blot from my memory; nor will future time, however distant, make me think of it but with the bitterest retrospect. My son died; and his mother, though perfectly recovered from her confinement, very soon followed him: a violent fever carried off my dear wife after we had been married fourteen months. Let the reader conceive, if he is equal to the task, the grief with which I was overwhelmed: I fell into a stupid insensibility, and felt my loss so severely as to seem not to feel it at all. I remained in this condition for five or six days, in an obstinate determination to take no nourishment; and I verily believe that, had it not been for Scipio, I should either have starved myself, or my heart would have burst; but my secretary, well knowing how to accommodate himself to

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the turnings and windings of the human heart, contrived to cheat my sorrows by falling in with their tone and tenor: he was artful enough to reconcile me to the duty of taking food, by serving up soups and lighter fare with so disconsolate an arrangement of features, that it looked as if he urged me to the revolting employment, not so much to preserve my life, as to perpetuate and render immortal my affliction.

This affectionate servant wrote to Don Alphonso to let him know of the misfortune which had happened to me, and my lamentable condition in consequence. That tender-hearted and compassionate nobleman, that generous friend, very soon repaired to Lirias. I cannot recall the moment when he first presented himself to my view, without even now being sensibly affected. My dear Santillane, said he, embracing me, I am not come to offer you impertinent consolation, but to weep over Antonia with you, as you would have wept with me over Seraphina, had the hand of death snatched her from me. In good truth, his tears bore testimony to his sincerity, and his sighs were blended with mine in the most friendly sympathy. Though overwhelmed with my affliction, I felt in the most lively manner the kindness of Don Alphonso.

The governor had a long conversation with Scipio respecting the measures to be taken for overcoming my despair. They judged it best to remove me for some time from Lirias, where every object incessantly brought back to my mind the image of Antonia.

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On this account the son of Don Cæsar proposed carrying me back with him to Valencia; and my secretary seconded the plan with so many unanswerable arguments, that I made no further opposition. I left Scipio and his wife on my estate, where my longer stay could have produced no other effect but that of aggravating and enhancing all my sorrows, and took my own departure with the governor. On my arrival at Valencia, Don Cæsar and his daughter-in-law spared no exertions to divert my sorrows from perpetual brooding; they plied me alternately with every sort of amusement, the most proper to turn the current of my thoughts to passing objects; but, in spite of all their pains, I remained plunged in melancholy, whence they were incompetent to draw me out. Nor was it for want of Scipio's kind attentions that my peace of mind was still so hopeless: he was continually going back and fore between Lirias and Valencia to inquire after me; and his journey home was cheerful or gloomy in proportion as he found more or less disposition in me to listen to the words of comfort, and to reward the affectionate solicitude of my friends.

He came one morning into my room. Sir, said he, with a great deal of agitation in his manner, a report is current about town, in which the whole monarchy is deeply interested: it is said that Philip the Third has departed this life, and that the prince, his son, is actually seated on the throne. To this it is added that the cardinal Duke of Lerma has lost the premiership, that he is even forbidden to appear at court,

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and that Don Gaspard de Guzman, Count of Olivarez, is actually at the head of the administration. I felt a little agitated by this sudden change, without knowing why. Scipio caught at this manifestation, and asked whether the veering of the wind in the political horizon might not blow me some good. How is that possible? What good can it blow me, my worthy friend? answered I. The court and I have shaken hands once for all: the revolutions which may take place there are all alike indifferent to me.

For a man at your time of life, replied that cunning son of a diviner, you are uncommonly mortified to all the uses of this world. Under your circumstances my curiosity would be all alive; I should go to Madrid and show my face to the young monarch, just to see whether he would recollect it, merely for the amusement of the thing. I understand you, said I; you would have me return to court and try my fortune again, or rather you would plunge me back into the gulf of avarice and ambition. Why should such baleful passions any more take possession of your breast? rejoined Scipio. Do not so much play the calumniator on your own virtue. I will answer for your firmness to yourself. The sound moral reflections which your disgrace has occasioned you to make on the vanities of a court life, are a sufficient security against all the dangers to be feared from that quarter. Embark boldly once again upon an ocean where you are acquainted with every shoal and rock in the dangerous navigation. Hold your tongue, you flatterer, said I with a smile of no very positive

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discouragement; are you weary of seeing me lead a retired and tranquil life? I thought my repose had been more dear to you.

Just at this period of our conversation, Don Cæsar and his son came in. They confirmed the news of the king's death, as well as the Duke of Lerma's misfortune. It appeared, moreover, that this minister, having requested permission to retire to Rome, had not been able to obtain it, but was ordered to confine himself to his marquisate at Denia. On this, as if they had been in league with my secretary, they advised me to go to Madrid and offer my congratulations to the new king, as one of his former acquaintances, with the merit of having rendered him even such services as the great are apt to reward more willingly than some which are performed with cleaner hands. For my part, said Don Alphonso, I have no doubt but they will be liberally acknowledged: Philip the Fourth is bound in honor to pay the Prince of Spain's debts. I consider the affair just in the same light as you do, said Don Cæsar; and Santillane's visit to court will doubtless prove the occasion of his arriving at the very first employments.

In good truth, my noble friends, exclaimed I, you do not consider what you are talking about. It should seem, were one to give ear to the soothing words of you both, as if I had nothing to do but to show my face at Madrid, and receive the key of office, or some foreign government, for my pains; but you are egregiously mistaken. I am, on the con-

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trary, well persuaded that the king would pass me over as a stranger, were I to throw myself in his way. I will make the experiment if you wish it, merely for the sake of undeceiving you. The lords of Leyva took me at my word, so that I could not help promising them to set out without loss of time for Madrid. No sooner did my secretary perceive my mind fully made up to the prosecution of this journey, than his ecstasies were wound up to the highest pitch: he was satisfied within himself, that if I did but present my excellent person before the new monarch, he would immediately single me out from the crowd of political candidates, and weigh me down under a load of dignities and emoluments. On the strength of these conjectures, puffing himself out and amusing his fancy with the most splendid extravagances of device, he raised me up to the first offices of the state, and pushed forward his own preferment in the path of my exaltation.

I therefore made my arrangements for returning to court, without the most distant intention of again sacrificing at the shrine of fortune, but merely to convince Don Cæsar and his son of their error in imagining that I was at all likely to ingratiate myself with the sovereign. It is true that there was some little lurking vanity at the bottom of all my philosophy, sprouting up in the shape of a desire to ascertain whether my royal master would throw away a thought on me now in the spring time of his new and blushing honors. Led out of that course solely by that tempter, curiosity, without a dream of hope,

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or any practical contrivance for turning the new reign to my own individual advantage, I set out for Madrid with Scipio, consigning the management of my household to Beatrice, who was well skilled in all the arts of domestic economy.

CHAPTER II.

GIL BLAS ARRIVES IN MADRID, AND MAKES HIS APPEARANCE AT COURT; THE KING IS BLESSED WITH A BETTER MEMORY THAN MOST OF HIS COURTIERS, AND RECOMMENDS HIM TO THE NOTICE OF HIS PRIME MINISTER. CONSEQUENCES OF THAT RECOMMENDATION.

We got to Madrid in less than eight days, Don Alphonso having given us two of his best horses, that we might lose no time on the road. We alighted at a ready-furnished lodging, where I had lived formerly, kept by Vincent Ferrero, my old landlord, who was uncommonly glad to see me again.

As this man prided himself on being in the secret of whatever was going forward either in court or city, I asked him after the best news. There is plenty of it, whether best or worst, answered he. Since the death of Philip the Third, the friends and partisans of the cardinal Duke of Lerma have been moving heaven and earth to support his eminence on the pinnacle of ministerial authority; but their efforts have been ineffectual: the Count of Olivarez has carried the day, in spite of all their industry. It is

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alleged that Spain will be no loser by the exchange, and that the present premier is possessed of a genius so extensive, a mind so capacious, that he would be competent to wield the machine of universal government. New brooms, they say, sweep clean! But, at all events, you may take this for certain, that the public is fully impressed with a very favorable opinion of his capacity; we shall see by and by whether the Duke of Lerma's situation is well or ill filled up. Ferrero, having got his tongue into the right train for wagging, gave me all the particulars of all the changes which had taken place at court since the Count of Olivarez had taken his seat at the helm of the state vessel.

Two days after my arrival at Madrid I repaired to the royal palace, after my dinner, and threw myself in the king's way as he was crossing the lobby to his closet; but his notice was not at all attracted by my appearance. Next day, I returned to the same place, but with no better success. On the third day he looked me full in the face as he passed by; but the stare was perfectly vacant, as far as my interest or my vanity was concerned. This being the case, I resolved in my own mind what was proper to be done. You see, said I to Scipio, who accompanied me, that the king is grown out of my recollection; or if his memory is not become more frail with the elevation of his circumstances, he has some private reasons for not choosing to renew the acquaintance. I think we cannot do better than make our way back as fast as possible for Valencia.

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Let us not be in too great a hurry for that, sir, answered my secretary; you know better than myself, having served a long apprenticeship, that there is no getting on at court without patience and perseverance. Be indefatigable in exhibiting your person to the prince's regards: by dint of forcing yourself on his observation, you will oblige him to ask himself the question who this assiduous frequenter of his haunts can possibly be, when memory must come to his aid, and trace the features of his cheapener in the purchase of the lovely Catalina's good graces.

That Scipio might have nothing to reproach me with, I so far lent myself to his wishes as to continue the same proceeding for the space of three weeks; when at length it happened one day that the monarch, noticing the frequency of my appearance, sent for me into his presence. I went into the closet, not without some perturbation of mind at the idea of a private interview with my sovereign. Who are you? said he; your features are not altogether strange to me. Where have I seen you? Please your majesty, answered I, trembling, I had the honor of escorting you one night with the Count of Lemos to the house of . . . Ah! I recollect it perfectly, cried the prince, as if a sudden light had broke in upon him; you were the Duke of Lerma's secretary; and if I am not mistaken, your name is Santillane. I have not forgotten that on the occasion alluded to you served me with a most commendable zeal, but received a left-handed recompense for your exertions. Did you not get into prison at the conclusion of the

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adventure? Yes, please your majesty, replied I; my confinement in the tower of Segovia lasted six months; but your goodness was exercised in procuring my release. That, replied he, does not cancel my debt to my faithful servant Santillane: it is not enough to have restored him to liberty; for I ought to make him ample amends for the evils which he has suffered on the score of his alacrity in my concerns.

Just as the prince was uttering these words, the Count of Olivarez came into the closet. The nerves of favorites are shaken by every breath, their irritability excited by every trifle: he was as much astonished as any favorite need be at the sight of a stranger in that place, and the king redoubled his wondering propensities by the following recommendation: Count, I consign this young man to your care; employ him, and let me find that you provide for his advancement. The minister affected to receive this order with the most gracious acquiescence, but looked me over from head to foot, with a glance from the corner of his eye, and was on tenter-hooks to find out who had been so strangely saddled upon him. Go, my friend, added the sovereign, addressing himself to me, and waving his hand for me to withdraw; the count will not fail to avail himself of your services in a manner the most conducive to the interests of my government, and the establishment of your own fortunes.

I immediately went out of the closet, and made the best of my way to the son of Cosclina, who, being

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overrun with impatience to inquire what the king had been talking about, fumbled at his fingers' ends, and was all over in an agitation. His first question was, whether we were to return to Valencia or become a part of the court. You shall form your own conclusions, answered I, at the same time delighting him with an account, word for word, of the little conversation I had just held with the monarch. My dear master, said Scipio, at once, in the excess of his joy, will you take me for your almanac-maker another time? You must acknowledge that we were not in the wrong: the lords of Leyva and myself have our eye-teeth about us! a journey to Madrid was the only measure to be adopted in such a case. Already I anticipate your appointment to an eminent post: you will turn out to be, some time or other, a Calderona to the Count of Olivarez. That is by no means the object of my ambition, observed I in return; the employment is placed on too rugged an eminence to excite any longings in my mind. I could wish for a good situation, where there could be no inducement to do what might go against my conscience, and where the favors of my prince are not likely to be bartered away for filthy lucre. Having experienced my own unfitness for the possession of patronage, I cannot be sufficiently on my guard against the inroads of avarice and ambition. Never think about that, sir, replied my secretary; the minister will give you some handsome appointment, which you may fill without any impeachment of your integrity or independence.

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Induced more by Scipio's importunity than my own curiosity, I repaired the following day, before sunrise, to the residence of the Count d'Olivarez, having been informed that every morning, whether in summer or winter, he gave audience by candlelight to all comers. I ensconced myself modestly in a corner of the saloon, and from my lurking-place took especial notice of the count when he made his appearance, for I had marked his person but cursorily in the king's closet. He was above the middle stature, and might pass for fat in a country where it is a rarity to see any but lean subjects. His shoulders were so high, as to look exactly as if he was humpbacked; but appearances were slanderous; for his blade-bones, though inelegant, were a pair; his head, which was large enough to be capacious, dropped down upon his chest by the unwieldiness of its own weight; his hair was black and unconscious of a curl, his face lengthened, his complexion olive-colored, his mouth retiring inwards, with the sharp-pointed, turn-up chin of a pantaloon.

This whole arrangement of structure and symmetry did not exactly make up the complete model of a nobleman according to the ideas of ancient art; nevertheless, as I believed him to be in a temper of mind favorable to the gratification of my wishes, I looked at his defects with an indulgent eye, and found him a man very much to my satisfaction. One of the best points about him was, that he received the public at large with the utmost affability and complacency, holding out his hand for petitions with as much good humor as if he were the person to be

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obliged; and this was a sufficient set-off against anything untoward in the expression of his countenance. In the mean time, when, in my turn, I came forward to pay my respects and make myself known to him, he darted at me a glance of rude dislike and frightful menace; then, turning his back, without condescending to give me audience, retired into his closet. Then it was that the ugliness of this nobleman's features appeared in all the extravagance of caricature, so that I made the best of my way out of the saloon, thunderstruck at so savage a reception, and quite at a loss how to conjecture what might be the consequence.

Having got back to Scipio, who was waiting for me at the door, Can you guess at all, said I, what sort of a greeting mine was? No, answered he, not as to the minute particulars; but with respect to the substance, easily enough: the minister, ready upon all occasions to fall in with the fancies of his royal master, must of course have made you a handsome offer of an ostensible and lucrative situation. That is all you know about the matter, replied I, and then went on to acquaint him circumstantially with all that passed. He listened to me with serious attention, and then said, The count could not have recollected your person; or rather, he must have been deceived by a fortuitous resemblance between you and some impertinent suitor. I would advise you to try another interview; I will lay a wager he will look on you more kindly. I adopted my secretary's suggestion, and stood for the second time in the

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presence of the minister; but he, behaving to me still worse than at first, puckered up his features the moment my unlucky countenance came within his ken, just as if it was connected with some lodged hate and certain loathing, which of force swayed him to offend, himself being offended; after this significant demonstration, he turned away his glaring eyeballs, and withdrew without uttering a word.

I was stung to the quick by so hostile a treatment, and in a humor to set out immediately on my return to Valencia; but to that project Scipio uniformly opposed his steady objections, not knowing how for the life of him to part with those flattering hopes which fancy had engendered in his brain. Do you not see plainly, said I, that the count wishes to drive me away from court? The monarch has testified in his presence some sort of favorable intention towards me, and is not that enough to draw down upon me the thorough hatred of the monarch's favorite? Let us drive before the wind, my good comrade; let us make up our minds to put quietly into port, and leave the open sea and the honors of the flag in the possession of an enemy with whom we are too feeble to contend. Sir, answered he, in high resentment against the Count of Olivarez, I would not strike so easily. I would go and complain to the king of the contempt in which his minister held his recommendation. Bad advice, indeed, my friend, said I; to take so imprudent a step as that would soon bring bitter repentance in

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the train of its consequences. I do not even know whether it is safe for me to remain any longer in this town.

At this hint, my secretary communed a little with his own thoughts; and, considering that in point of fact we had to do with a man who kept the key of the tower of Segovia in his pocket, my fears became naturalized in his breast. He no longer opposed my earnest desire of leaving Madrid, and I determined to take my measures accordingly on the very next day.

CHAPTER III.

THE PROJECT OF RETIREMENT IS PREVENTED, AND JOSEPH NAVARRO BROUGHT UPON THE STAGE AGAIN BY AN ACT OF SIGNAL SERVICE.

On my way home to my lodgings I met Joseph Navarro, whom the reader will recollect as on the establishment of Don Balthasar de Zuniga, and one of my old friends. I made my bow first at a distance, then went up to him, and asked whether he knew me again, and if he would still be so good as to speak to a wretch who had repaid his friendship with ingratitude. You acknowledge then, said he, that you have not behaved very handsomely by me? Yes, answered I; and you are fully justified in laying on your reproaches thick and threefold: I deserve them all, unless, indeed, my guilt may be thought to have been atoned by the remorse of conscience

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attendant on it. Since you have repented of your misconduct, replied Navarro, embracing me, I ought no longer to hold it in remembrance. For my part, I knew not how to hug Joseph close enough in my arms; and we both of us resumed our original kind feelings towards one another.

He had heard of my imprisonment and the derangement of my affairs; but of what followed he was totally ignorant. I informed him of it; relating, word for word, my conversation with the king, without suppressing the minister's late ungracious reception of me, any more than my present purpose of retiring into my favorite obscurity. Beware of removing from the scene of action, said he, since the sovereign has shown a disposition to befriend you: there are always uses to be made of such a circumstance. Between ourselves, the Count of Olivarez has something rather unaccountable in his character: he is a very good sort of nobleman, but rather whimsical withal: sometimes, as on the present occasion, he acts in a most offensive manner, and none but himself can furnish a clew to disentangle the intricate thread of his motives and their results. But however this may be, or whatever reasons might have swayed him to give you so scurvy a reception, keep your footing here, and do not budge; he will not be able to hinder you from thriving under the royal shelter and protection: take my word for that! I will just give a hint upon the subject this evening to Signor Don Balthasar de Zuniga, my master; he is uncle to the Count of Olivarez, and shares with

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him in the toils and cares of office. Navarro, having given me this assurance, inquired where I lived, and then we parted.

It was not long before we met again; for he came to call on me the very next day. Signor de Santillane, said he, you are not without a protector; my master will lend you his powerful support: on the strength of the good character which I have given your lordship, he has promised to speak to his nephew, the Count of Olivarez, in your behalf; and I doubt not but he will effectually prepossess him in your favor. My friend Navarro, not meaning to serve me by halves, introduced me two days afterwards to Don Balthazar, who said, with a gracious air, Signor de Santillane, your friend Joseph has pronounced your panegyric in terms which have won me over completely to your interest. I made a low obeisance to Signor de Zuniga, and answered, that to the latest period of my life I should entertain the most lively sense of my obligation to Navarro for having secured to me the protection of a minister who was considered, and that for the best reasons possible, as the presiding genius, the greater luminary, or, as it were, the eye and mind of the ministerial council. Don Balthasar, at this unexpected stroke of flattery, clapped me on the shoulder with an approving chuckle, and returned my compliment by a more significant intimation: You may call on the Count of Olivarez again to-morrow, and then you will have more reason to be pleased with him.

For the third time, therefore, did I make my

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appearance before the prime minister, who, picking me out from among the mob of suitors, cast upon me a look conveying with it a simper of welcome, from which I ventured to draw a good omen. This is all as it should be, said I to myself; the uncle has brought the nephew to his proper bearings. I no longer anticipated any other than a favorable reception, and my confidence was fully justified. The count, after having given audience to the promiscuous crowd, took me with him into his closet, and said with a familiar address, My friend Santillane, you must excuse the little disquietude I have occasioned you merely for my own amusement; it was done in sport, though it was death to you, for the sole purpose of practising on your discretion, and observing to what measures your disgust and disappointment would incite you. Doubtless you must have concluded that your services were displeasing to me; but on the contrary, my good fellow, I must confess frankly, that, as far as appears at present, you are perfectly to my mind. Though the king, my master, had not enjoined me to take charge of your fortunes, I should have done so of my own free choice. Besides, my uncle, Don Balthasar de Zuniga, to whom I can refuse nothing, has requested me to consider you as a man for whom he particularly interests himself; that alone would be enough to fix my confidence in you, and make me most sincerely your friend.

This outset of my career produced so lively an impression on my feelings, that they became unin-

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telligibly tumultuous. I threw myself at the minister's feet, who insisted on my rising immediately, and then went on to the following effect: Return hither to-day after dinner, and ask for my steward; he will acquaint you with the orders which I shall have given him. With these words his excellency broke up the conference to hear mass, according to his constant custom every day after giving audience; he then attended the king's levee.

CHAPTER IV.

GIL BLAS INGRATIATES HIMSELF WITH THE COUNT OF OLIVAREZ.

I DID not fail returning after dinner to the prime minister's house, and asking for his steward, whose name was Don Raymond Caporis. No sooner had I made myself known, than paying his civilities to me in the most respectful manner, Sir, said he, follow me, if you please: I am to do myself the honor of showing you the way to the apartment which is ordered for you in this family. Having spoken thus, he led me up a narrow staircase to a gallery communicating with five or six rooms, which composed the second story belonging to one wing of the house, and were furnished neatly, but without ostentation. You behold, resumed he, the lodging assigned you by his lordship, where you will always have a table of six persons, kept at his expense. You will be

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waited on by his own servants; and there will always be a carriage at your command. But that is not all: his excellency insisted on it, in the most pointed manner, that you should be treated in every respect with the same attention as if you belonged to the house of Guzman.

What the devil is the meaning of all this? said I within myself. What construction ought I to put upon all these honors? Is there not some humorous prank at the bottom of it? and must it not be more in the way of diversion than anything else, that the minister is flattering me up with so imposing an establishment? While I was ruminating in this uncertainty, fluctuating between hope and fear, a page came to let me know that the count was asking for me. I waited instantly on his lordship, who was quite alone in his closet. Well! Santillane, said he, are you satisfied with your rooms, and with my orders to Don Raymond? Your excellency's liberality, answered I, seems out of all proportion with its object; so that I receive it with fear and trembling. Why so? replied he. Can I be too lavish of distinction to a man whom the king has committed to my care, and for whose interests he especially commanded me to provide? No: that is impossible; and I do no more than my duty in placing you on a footing of respectability and consequence. No longer, therefore, let what I do for you be a subject of surprise; but rely on it that splendor in the eye of the world, and the solid advantages of accumulating wealth, are equally within your grasp, if you do but

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attach yourself as faithfully to me as you did to the Duke of Lerma.

But now that we are on the subject of that nobleman, continued he, it is said that you lived on terms of personal intimacy with him. I have a strong curiosity to learn the circumstances which led to your first acquaintance, as well as in what department you acted under him. Do not disguise or gloss over the slightest particular, for I shall not be satisfied without a full, true, and circumstantial recital. Then it was that I recollected in what an embarrassing predicament I stood with the Duke of Lerma on a similar occasion, and by what line of conduct I extricated myself: that same course I adopted once again with the happiest success; whereby the reader is to understand that throughout my narrative I softened down the passages likely to give umbrage to my patron, and glanced with a superficial delicacy over transactions which would have reflected but little lustre on my own character. I likewise manifested a considerate tenderness for the Duke of Lerma; though, by giving that fallen favorite no quarter, I should better have consulted the taste of him whom I wished to please. As for Don Rodrigo de Calderona, there I laid about me with the religious fury of a bishop in a battle. I brought together, and displayed in the most glaring colors, all the anecdotes I had been able to pick up respecting his corrupt practices and underhand dealing in the sale of promotions, military, ecclesiastical, and civil.

What you have told me about Calderona, cried

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the minister with eagerness, exactly squares with certain memorials which have been presented to me, containing the heads of charges still more seriously affecting his character. He will very soon be put upon his trial, and if you have any wish to glut your revenge by his ruin, I am of opinion that the object of your desire is near at hand. I am far from thirsting after his blood, said I, though, had it depended on him, mine might have been shed in the tower of Segovia, where he was the occasion of my taking lodgings for a pretty long term. What! inquired his excellency, was it Don Rodrigo who procured you that sudden journey? This is a part of the story of which I was not aware before. Don Balthasar, to whom Navarro gave a summary of your adventures, told me, indeed, that the late king gave orders for your commitment, as a mark of his indignation against you for having led the Prince of Spain astray, and taken him to a house of suspicious character in the night: but that is all I know of the matter, and cannot, for the life of me, conjecture what part Calderona could possibly have had to play in that tragicomedy. A principal part, whether on the stage or in real life, answered I; that of a jealous lover, taking vengeance for an injury sustained in the tenderest point. At the same time I related minutely all the facts with which the reader is already acquainted, and touched his risible propensities, difficult as they were of access, so exactly in the right place, that he could not help wagging his under-hung jaw in a paroxysm of humor-stricken ecstasy, and laughing

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till he cried again. Catalina's double cast in the drama delighted him exceedingly; her sometimes playing the niece and sometimes personating the granddaughter seemed to tickle his fancy more than anything; nor was he altogether inattentive to the appearance which the Duke of Lerma made in this undignified farce of state.

When I had finished my story, the count gave me leave to depart, with an assurance that on the next day he would not fail to make trial of my talents for business. I ran immediately to the family hotel of Zuniga, to thank Don Balthasar for his good offices, and to acquaint my friend Joseph with the favorable dispositions of the prime minister, and my brilliant prospects in consequence.

CHAPTER V.

THE PRIVATE CONVERSATION OF GIL BLAS WITH NAVARRO, AND HIS FIRST EMPLOYMENT IN THE SERVICE OF THE COUNT D'OLIVAREZ.

As soon as I got to the ear of Joseph, I told him, with much trepidation of spirits, what a world of topics I had to deposit in his private ear. He took me where we might be alone, when I asked him, after having communicated a key to the whole transaction up to the present time, what he thought of the business as it stood. I think, answered he, that you are in a fair way to make an enormous fortune.

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Everything turns out according to your wishes: you have made yourself acceptable to the prime minister; and what must be taken for something in the account, I can render you the same service as my uncle Melchior de la Ronda, when you attached yourself to the archiepiscopal establishment of Grenada. He spared you the trouble of finding out the weak side of that prelate and his principal officers, by discovering their different characters to you; and it is my purpose, after his example, to bring you perfectly acquainted with the count, his lady countess, and their only daughter, Donna Maria de Guzman.

The minister's parts are quick, his judgment penetrating, and his talents altogether calculated for the formation of extensive projects. He affects the credit of universal genius, on the strength of a showy smattering in general science; so that there is no subject, in his own opinion, too difficult to be decided on his mere authority. He sets himself up for a practical lawyer, a complete general, and a politician of thorough-paced sagacity. Add to all this, that he is so obstinately wedded to his own opinions, as unchangeably to persevere in the path of his own chalking out, to the absolute contempt of better advice, for fear of seeming to be influenced by any good sense or intelligence but what he would be thought to engross in the resources of his own mind. Between ourselves, this blot in his character may produce strange consequences, which it may be well for the monarchy should indulgent heaven for the defect of human means avert! As for his talents in coun-

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cil, he shines in debate by the force of natural eloquence, and would write as well as he speaks if he did not injudiciously affect a certain dignity of style, which degenerates into affectation, quaintness, and obscurity. His modes of thinking are peculiar to himself; he is capricious in conduct and visionary in design. Here you have the picture of his mind, the light and shade of his intellectual merits: the qualities of his heart and disposition remain to be delineated. He is generous and warm in his friendships. It is said that he is revengeful; but would he be a Spaniard if he were otherwise? In addition to this, he has been accused of ingratitude, for having driven the Duke of Uzeda and Friar Lewis Aliaga into banishment, though he owed them, according to common report, obligations of the most binding nature; and yet even this must not be looked into so narrowly under his circumstances: there are few breasts capacious enough to afford houseroom for two such opposite inmates as political ambition and gratitude.

Donna Agnes de Zuniga é Velasco, Countess of Olivarez, continued Joseph, is a lady to whom it is impossible to impute more than one fault, but that is a huge one; for it consists in making a market, and a market the most exorbitant in its terms, of her natural influence over the mind of her husband. As for Donna Maria de Guzman, who beyond all dispute is at this moment the very first match in Spain, she is a lady of first-rate accomplishments, and absolutely idolized by her father. Regulate your conduct upon these hints: make your court

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with art and plausibility to these two ladies, and let it appear as if you were more devoted to the Count of Olivarez than ever you were to the Duke of Lerma before your forced excursion to Segovia; you will become a leading and powerful member of the administration.

I should advise you, moreover, added he, to see my master, Don Balthasar, from time to time; for though you have no longer any occasion for his interest to push you forward, it will not be amiss to waste a little incense upon him. You stand very high in his good opinion; preserve your footing there, and cultivate his friendship; it may stand you in some stead on any emergency. I could not help observing, that as the uncle and nephew were in a certain sort partners in the government of the state, there might possibly be some little symptom of jealousy between brothers near the throne. On the contrary, answered he, they are united by the most confidential ties. Had it not been for Don Balthasar, the Count of Olivarez might probably never have been prime minister; for you are to know, that after Philip the Third had paid the debt of nature, all the adherents and partisans belonging to the house of Sandoval made a great stir, some in favor of the cardinal, and others on his son's behalf; but my master, a greater adept in court intrigue than any of them, and the count, who is nearly as great an adept as himself, disconcerted all their measures, and took their own so judiciously for the purpose of stepping into the vacant place, that their rivals had

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no chance against them. The Count of Olivarez, being appointed prime minister, divided the duties with his uncle, Don Balthasar; leaving foreign affairs to him, and taking the home department to himself: the consequence is, that the bonds of family friendship are drawn closer between these two noblemen than if political influence had no share in their mutual interests: they are perfectly independent in their respective lines of business, and live together on terms of good understanding which no intrigue can possibly affect or alter.

Such was the substance of my conversation with Joseph, and the advantage to be derived from it was my own to make the most of: at all events, it was my duty to thank Signor de Zuniga for all the influence he had the goodness to exert in my favor. He assured me with infinite good-breeding that he should avail himself of every opportunity as it arose to promote my wishes, and that he was very glad his nephew had behaved so as to meet my ideas, because he meant to refresh his memory in my behalf, being determined, as he was pleased to say, to place it beyond all manner of doubt how far he himself participated in all my views, and to make it evident that, instead of one fast friend, I had two. In terms like these did Don Balthasar, through mere friendship for Navarro, take the moulding of my fortunes on himself.

On that same evening did I leave my paltry lodging to take up my abode at the prime minister's, where I sat down to supper with Scipio in my own

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suit of apartments. There were we both waited on by the servants belonging to the household, who, as they stood behind our chairs, while we were affecting the pomp and circumstance of political elevation, were more likely than not to be laughing in their sleeves at the pantomime they had been ordered by their manager to play in our presence. When they had taken away and left us to ourselves, my secretary, being no longer under restraint, gave vent to a thousand wild imaginations which his sprightly temper and inventive hopes engendered in his fancy. On my part, though by no means cold or insensible to the brilliant prospects which were opening on my view, I did not as yet yield in the least degree to the weakness of being thrust aside from the right line of my philosophy by temporal allurements. So much otherwise, that on going to bed I fell into a sound sleep, without being haunted in my dreams by those phantoms of flattering delusion which might have gained admittance with no severe question from a corruptible door-keeper. The ambitious Scipio, on the contrary, tossed and tumbled all night in the agitation of restless contrivance. Whenever he dozed a little imp took possession of his brain, with a pen behind its ear, working out by all the rules of arithmetic the bulky sum total of his daughter Seraphina's marriage portion.

No sooner had I got my clothes on the next morning, than a message came from his lordship. I flew like lightning at the summons, when his excellency said, Now then, Santillane, suppose you give us a

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specimen of your talents for business. You say that the Duke of Lerma used to give you state papers to bring into official form; and I have one, by way of experiment, on which you shall try your skill. The subject you will easily comprehend: it turns upon an exposition of public affairs, such as to throw an artificial light on the first appearance of the new ministry, and to prejudice the public in its favor. I have already whispered it about by my emissaries, that every department of the state was completely disorganized, that the talents which preceded us were no talents at all; and the object at present is to impress both court and city, by a formal declaration, with the idea that our aid is absolutely necessary to save the monarchy itself from sinking. On this theme you may expatiate till the populace become lockjawed with astonishment, and the sober part of the public are gravely argued out of all prepossession in favor of the discarded party. By way of contrast, you will talk of the *dignus vindice nodus*, taking care to translate it into Spanish; and boast of the measures adopted, under the new order of things, to secure the permanent glory of the king's reign, to give perpetual prosperity to his dominions, and to confer perfect, unchangeable happiness on his good people.

His lordship, having given out the general subject of my thesis, left with me a paper containing the heads of charges, whether just or unjust, against the late administration; and I remember perfectly well that there were ten articles, whose lightest word, even of the lightest article, would harrow up the

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soul of a true Spaniard, and make his knotted and combined locks to part. That the current of my fancy might experience no interruption, he shut me into a little closet near his own, where the spirit of poetry might possess me in all its freedom and independence. My best faculties were called forth to compose a statement of affairs commensurate with my own concern in the sweeping of the new brooms. My first object was to lay open the nakedness and abandonment of the kingdom: the finances in a state of bankruptcy, the civil list and immediate resources of the crown pawned fifty times over, the navy unpaid, dismantled, and in mutiny. All this hideous delineation was referred for its justice and accuracy to the wrongheadedness and stupidity of government at the close of the last reign, and the doctrine most strongly enforced, that unexampled wisdom and patriotism only could ward off the fatal consequences. In short, the monarchy could only be sustained on the shoulders of our political sufficiency and reforming prudence. The ex-ministry were so cruelly belabored, that the Duke of Lerma's ruin, according to the terms of my syllogism, was the salvation of Spain. To own the truth, though my professions were in the spirit of Christian charity towards that nobleman, I was not sorry to give him a sly rub in the exercise of my function. O man! man! what a compound of candor-breathing satire and splenetic impartiality art thou!

Towards the conclusion, having finished my frightful portraiture of overhanging evils, I endeavored to

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allay the storm my art had raised, by making futurity as bright as the past had been gloomy. The Count of Olivarez was brought in at the close, like the tutelary deity of an ancient commonwealth in the crisis of its fate. I promised more than paganism ever feigned, or chivalry fancied in the wildest of its crusading projects. In a word, I so exactly executed what the new minister meant, that he seemed not to know his own hints again, when drawn out in my emphatic and appropriate language. Santillane, said he, do you know that this is more like the composition one might expect from a secretary of state, than like that of a private secretary? I can no longer be surprised that the Duke of Lerma was fond of calling your talents into action. Your style is concise, and by no means inelegant; but it creeps rather too much in the level paths of nature. At the same time, pointing out the passages which did not hit his fancy, he corrected them; and I gathered from the touches he threw in, that Navarro was right in saying he affected sententious wit, but mistook for it quaint and stale conceits. Nevertheless, though he preferred the stately, or rather the grotesque, in writing, he suffered two thirds of my performance to stand without alteration, and, by way of proving how entirely he was satisfied, sent me three hundred pistoles by Don Raymond after dinner.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE APPLICATION OF THE THREE HUNDRED PISTOLES, AND SCIPIO'S COMMISSION CONNECTED WITH THEM. SUCCESS OF THE STATE PAPER MENTIONED IN THE LAST CHAPTER

THIS handsome present of the minister furnished Scipio with a new subject of congratulation, by reason of our second appearance at court. You may remark, said he, that fortune is preparing a load of aggrandizement to lay on your lordship's shoulders. Are you still sorry for having turned your back on solitude? May the Count of Olivarez live forever! He is a very different sort of a master from his predecessor. The Duke of Lerma, with all your devotion to his service, left you to live upon suction for months, without a pistole to bless yourself with; and the count has already made you a present which you could have had no reason to expect but after a course of long service.

I should very much like, added he, that the lords of Leyva should be witnesses of your great success, or at least that they should be informed of it. It is high time, indeed, answered I, and I meant to speak with you on that subject. They must doubtless be impatient to hear of my proceedings; but I waited till my fate was fixed, and till I could decide for certain whether I should stay at court or not. Now that I am sure of my destination, you have only to set out for Valencia whenever you please, and to acquaint those noblemen with my present situation, which I

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consider as their doing, since it is evident that but for them, I should never have resolved on my journey to Madrid. My dear master, cried the son of Bohemian accident, what joy shall I communicate by relating what has happened to you! Why am I not already at the gates of Valencia? But I shall be there forthwith. Don Alphonso's two horses are ready in the stable. I shall take one of my lord's livery servants with me. Besides that company is pleasant on the road, you know very well the effect of official parade in making impression on the natives of a provincial town.

I could not help laughing at my secretary's foolish vanity; and yet, with vanity perhaps more than equal to his own, I left him to do as he pleased. Go about your business, said I, and make the best of your way back; for I have another commission to give you. I mean to send you to the Asturias with some money for my mother. Through neglect I have suffered the time to elapse when I promised to remit her a hundred pistoles, and pledged you to make the payment in person. Such engagements ought to be held sacred by a son; and I reproach myself with inaccuracy in the observance of mine. Sir, answered Scipio, within six weeks I shall bring you an account of both your commissions; having opened my budget to the lords of Leyva, looked in at your country-house, and taken a peep at the town of Oviedo, the recollection of which I cannot admit into my mind, without turning over three fourths of the inhabitants, and one half of the remaining quarter,

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to the corrective discipline of that infernal executioner, who is supposed to be kept on foot for the purpose of castigating sinners. I then counted down one hundred pistoles to that same son of a wandering mother for my honored parent's annuity, and another hundred for himself; meaning that he should perform his long journey without grumbling on my account by the way.

Some days after his departure his lordship sent our memorial to press; and it was no sooner published than it became the topic of conversation in every circle throughout Madrid. The people, enamoured of novelty, took up this well-written statement of their own wretchedness with fond partiality; the derangement and exhaustion of the finances, painted with a mixture of truth and poetry, excited a strong feeling of popular indignation against the Duke of Lerma, and if these paper bullets of the brain, cast in the political armory of a rival, failed to carry victory with them in the opinions of all mankind, they were, at all events, hailed with triumph by the most clamorous of our own partisans. As for the magnificent promises which the Count of Olivarez threw in, and among others that of keeping the machine of state in motion by a system of economy, without adding to the public burdens, they were caught at with avidity by the citizens at large, and considered as pledges of an enlightened and patriotic policy, so that the whole city resounded with the acclamation of panegyric and congratulation on the opening of new prospects.

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The minister, delighted to have gained his end so easily, which in that publication had only been to draw popularity upon himself, was now determined to seize the substance as well as catch at the shadow, by an act of unquestionable credit with the subject, and high utility to the king's service. For that purpose he had recourse to the Emperor Galba's contrivance, consisting in a forced regurgitation of ill-gotten spoils from individuals who had made large fortunes, hell — and their own consciences knew best how — in the superintendence of the royal expenditure. When he had squeezed these sponges till they were dry again, and had filled the king's coffers with the drainings, he undertook to render the reform permanent by abolishing all pensions, not excepting his own, and curtailing the gratuities too frequently bestowed on favorites out of the prince's privy purse. To succeed in this design, which he could not carry into effect without changing the face of the government, he charged me with the composition of a new state paper, furnishing the substance and the form from his own idea. He then advised me to raise my style as much as possible above the level of my ordinary simplicity, and to give an air of more eloquence to my phraseology. A hint is sufficient, my lord, said I; your excellency wishes to unite sublimity with illumination, and it shall be so. I shut myself up in the same closet where I had already worked so successfully, and sat down stiffly to my task, first calling to my aid the lofty and clear perceptions, the noble and sonorous expressions of my old instructor, the Archbishop of Grenada.

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I began by laying it down as a first maxim of political philosophy, that the vital functions, the respiration as it were of all monarchy, depended on the strict administration of the finances; that in our particular case, that duty became imperiously urgent, irresistibly impressing on our consciences; and that the revenue should be considered as the nerves and sinews of Spain, to hold her rivals in check and keep her enemies in awe. After this general declamation, I pointed out to the sovereign — for to him the memorial was addressed — that by cutting down all pensions and perquisites dependent on the ordinary income, he would not thereby deprive himself of that truly royal pleasure, a princely munificence towards those of his subjects who had established a fair claim to his favors; because, without drawing upon his treasury, he had the means of distributing more acceptable rewards; that for one branch of service, there were viceroyalties, lieutenancies, orders of merit, and all sorts of military commissions; for another, high judicial situations with salaries annexed, civil offices of magistracy with sounding titles to give them consequence; and though last, not least, all the temporal possessions of the church to animate the piety of its spiritual pastors.

This memorial, which was much longer than the first, occupied me nearly three days; but as luck would have it, my performance was exactly to my master's mind, who, finding it written with sententious cogency, and bristled up with metaphors in the declamatory parts, complimented me in the highest

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terms. That is vastly well expressed indeed, said he, laying his finger on a passage here and there, and picking out all the most inflated sentences he could find: that language bears the stamp of fine composition, and might pass for the production of a classic. Courage, my friend! I foresee that your services will be worth their weight in gold. And yet, notwithstanding the applauses he lavished on my classical composition, a few of his own heightening touches, he thought, would make it read still better. He put a good deal of his own stuff into it, and the medley was manufactured into a piece of eloquence which was considered as unanswerable by the king and all the court. The whole city joined in opinion with the higher orders, deriving the most flattering hopes of the future from these grand promises, and concluding that the monarchy must recover its pristine splendor during the ministry of so illustrious a character. His excellency, finding that my sermon on economy was fraught with practical inferences of utility to him, was kind enough to wish that I should profit by the exercise of my own talents. In conformity therefore with his new system of patronage, he gave me an annuity of five hundred crowns on the commandery of Castile; and the acceptance of it was so much the more palatable, as no dirty work had been done for it, but it was honestly though cheaply earned.

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CHAPTER VII.

GIL BLAS MEETS WITH HIS FRIEND FABRICIO ONCE MORE; THE ACCIDENT, PLACE, AND CIRCUMSTANCES DESCRIBED, WITH THE PARTICULARS OF THEIR CONVERSATION TOGETHER.

NOTHING gave his lordship greater pleasure than to hear the general decision of Madrid on the conduct of his administration. Not a day passed but he inquired what they were saying of him in the political world. He kept spies in pay, to bring him an exact account of what was going on in the city. They particularized the most trivial discourses which they overheard; and their orders being to suppress nothing, his self-love was grazed now and then, for the people have a way of bolting out home truths, without any nice calculation where they may glance.

Finding that the count loved political small talk, I made it my business to frequent places of public resort after dinner, and to chime in with the conversation of genteel people whenever opportunity offered. Should the measures of government happen to be canvassed among them, I pricked up my ears, and greedily took in their discourse; if any thing worth repeating was said, his excellency was sure to hear of it. It can scarcely be necessary to hint, that I never carried home any thing which was not likely to pay for the porterage.

One day, returning from one of these little conversational parties, my road lay in front of a hos-

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pital. It occurred to me to go in. I walked through two or three wards filled with diseased patients, and examined their beds to see that they were properly taken care of. Among these unhappy wretches, whom I could not look at without the most painful feelings, I observed one whose features struck me: it surely could be no other than Fabricio, my countryman and chum! To look at him more closely, I drew near his bedside, and finding, beyond a possibility of doubt, that it was the poet Nunez, I stopped to look at him for a few seconds without saying a word. He also fixed his regards on me. At length breaking silence, Do not my eyes deceive me? said I. Is it indeed Fabricio, and here? It is indeed, answered he, coldly, and you need not wonder at it. Since we parted, I have been working indefatigably at the trade of an author: I have written novels, plays, and works of genius in every department. My brain is fairly spun out, and here I am.

I could not help laughing at such a sketch of literary biography, and still more at the serious air of the accompanying action. What! cried I, has your muse brought you to this pass? Has she played you such a jade's trick as this? Even as you witness, answered he; this establishment is a sort of half-pay receptacle for invalids on the muster-roll of disabled wit. You have acted discreetly, my good friend, to lay yourself out for promotion in a different line. But they tell me, you are no longer a courtier, and that your prospects in political life

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were all blasted; nay, they went so far as to affirm, that you were committed to close custody by the king's order. They told you no more than the truth, replied I; the delightful vision of political eminence wherein you left me last, soon shifted the scene of my incoherent dreams to a prison and complete destitution. But for all that, my friend, here you behold me again in a better plight than ever. That is quite out of the question, said Nunez: your deportment is discreet and decent; you have not that supercilious and devil-take-the-hindmost sort of aspect which good keep communicates to the human face. The reverses of this checkered life, replied I, have brought me down to the level of the more modest virtues; I have taken a lesson in the school of adversity, to enjoy the possession of a good stud without riding the great horse.

Tell me then candidly, cried Fabricio, raising his head upon his hand with his elbow upon the pillow, what your present occupation can possibly be. A steward perhaps to some nobleman out at elbows, or man of business to some rich widow! Something better than either the one or the other, rejoined I; but excuse me from saying more at present: another time your curiosity shall be satisfied. It is enough at present to assure you that my means are equal to my inclination, and that you may command independence through me; but then you must submit to an embargo on your wit, and a non-intercourse act between you and the faculty of writing, whether in verse or prose. Can you make this sacrifice to my

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friendship? I have already made it to the powers above, said he, in my last critical sickness. A Dominican made me forswear poetry, as an amusement bordering on criminality, but at all events beside the turnpike-road of good sense. I wish you joy, my dear Nunez, replied I; but beware of a revoke. There is not the least danger on that head, rejoined he: the Muses and I have agreed on terms of separation: just as you came in at that door, I was conning over a farewell ode. Good Master Fabricio, said I, with a wise swagging to and fro of my head, it is a doubtful question whether your vow of abjuration ought to pass current with the Dominican and myself: you seem over head and ears in love with those virgins incarnate. No, no, contended he peevishly, I have cut the connection asunder. Nay, more, I have quarrelled with their keepers, the public. The readers of these days do not deserve an author of more genius than themselves: I should be sorry to write down to their comprehension. You are not to suppose that this is the language of disgust; it is my sincere and well-weighed opinion. Applause and hisses are just the same to me. It is a toss up who fails and who succeeds: the wit of to-day is the blockhead of to-morrow. What cursed fools our dramatists must be, to care for anything but their poundage when their plays happen to be received! It is all very well for a few nights! But only fancy a revival at the end of twenty years, and what a figure they will cut then! The audiences of the present day turn up

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their noses at the stock pieces of the last age, and it is a question whether their taste will fare better with their more critical descendants. If that conjecture be probable, the inventors of clap-traps now will be the butt of cat-calls hereafter. It is just the same with novel writers, and all other manufacturers of unnecessary literature; they strut and fret for an hour, and then are no more seen or heard of. The glories of successful authorship are the mere vapors of a murky atmosphere, meteors of a marsh, foul coruscations of a dunghill, cathedral tapers to put out the galaxy, blue flames of coarse paper held over a candle.

Though these caricatures of rival renown were the mere creations of jealousy in the poet of the Asturias, it was not my business to correct his ill temper. I am delighted, said I, that wit and you have had so serious a quarrel, and that the diarrhœa of your inventive faculties has been cured by an astringent. You may depend on it, I will put you in the way of a good livelihood, without drawing deep upon your intellectual credit. So much the better, cried he; wit smells like carrion in my nostrils, or rather like a pungent and deleterious perfume; fragrant to the sense, but corrosive to the vitals. I heartily wish, my dear Fabricio, resumed I, that you may always keep in that mind. Only wash your hands completely of poetry, and, you may depend on it, I will enable you to keep your head above water without picking or stealing. In the mean while, added I, slipping a purse of sixty pistoles into his hand, accept this as a slight instance of my regard.

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O friend like the friends in days of yore, cried the son of barber Nunez, out of his wits with joy and gratitude, it was heaven itself which sent you into this hospital, whence your goodness is now discharging me! Before we parted, I gave him my address, and invited him to come and see me as soon as his health would permit. He opened his eyes as an oyster does its shell, when I told him that I lodged under the minister's roof. O illustrious Gil Blas! said he, great as Pompey and fortunate as Sylla, whose lot it is to be hand in glove with the dictators of modern times! I rejoice most disinterestedly in your good fortune, because it is so very evident what a noble use you make of it.

CHAPTER VIII.

GIL BLAS GETS FORWARD PROGRESSIVELY IN HIS MASTER'S AFFECTIONS. SCIPIO'S RETURN TO MADRID, AND ACCOUNT OF HIS JOURNEY.

The Count of Olivarez, whom I shall henceforward call my lord duke, because the king was pleased to confer that dignity on him about this time, was infested with a weakness which I did not suffer to pass without taking toll; it was a furious desire of being beloved. The moment he fancied that any one really liked him, his heart was caught in a trap. This was not lost upon my keen sense of character. It was not enough to do precisely as he ordered; I

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superadded a zeal in the execution which made him mine. I laid myself out to his liking in every thing, and provided beforehand for his most eccentric wishes.

By conduct like this, which almost always answers, I became by degrees my master's favorite; and he, on the other hand, as if he had got round to my blind side also, wormed himself into my affections by giving me his own. So forward did I get into his good graces, as to halve his confidence with Signor Carnero, his principal secretary.

Carnero had played my game, and that so successfully as to be intrusted with the greater mysteries. We two, therefore, were the keepers of the prime minister's conscience, and held the keys of all his secrets; with this difference, that Carnero was consulted on state affairs, myself about his private concerns, dividing the business into two separate departments; and we were each of us equally pleased with our own. We lived together without jealousy, and certainly without attachment. I had every reason to be satisfied with my quarters, where continual intercourse gave me an opportunity of prying into the duke's inmost soul, which was a masked battery to all mankind beside, but plain as a pike-staff to me, when he no longer questioned the sincerity of my attachment to him.

Santillane, said he one day, you were witness to the Duke of Lerma's possession of an authority more like that of an absolute monarch than a favorite minister; and yet I am still happier than he was at

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the very summit of his good fortune. He had two formidable enemies in his own son, the Duke of Uzeda, and in the confessor of Philip the Third: but there is no one now about the king who has credit enough to stand in my way, or even, as I am aware, the slightest inclination to do me mischief.

It is true, continued he, that on my accession to the ministry, it was my first care to remove all hangers-on from about the prince but those of my own family or connections. By means of viceroyalties or embassies I got rid of all the nobility who, by their personal merit, could have interfered with me in the good graces of the sovereign, whom I mean to engross entirely to myself; so that I may say at the present moment, no statesman of the time holds me in check by the ascendency of his personal influence. You see, Gil Blas, I open my mind to you. As I have reason to think that you are mine, heart and soul, I have chosen to put you in possession of everything. You are a clever youth, with reflection, penetration, and discretion; in short, you are just the very creature to acquit yourself of all possible little offices in all possible directions; you are also a young fellow of very promising parts, and must, in the nature of things, be in my interests.

There was no standing the attack which these flattering representations were calculated to make upon the weakly-defended fortress of my philosophy. Unauthorized whims of avarice and ambition mounted suddenly into my head, and brought forward certain sentiments of political speculation which were sup-

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posed to have been in abeyance. I gave the minister an assurance that I should fulfil his intentions to the utmost of my power, and held myself in readiness to execute, without examination or interference, all the orders it might be his pleasure to give me.

While I was thus disposed to take fortune in her affable fit, Scipio returned from his peregrination. I have no long story for you, said he. The lords of Leyva were delighted at your reception from the king, and at the manner in which the Count of Olivarez and you came to understand one another.

My friend, said I, you would have delighted them still more, had you been able to tell them on what a footing I am now with my lord. My advances since your departure have been prodigious. Happy man be his dole, my dear master, answered he: my mind forebodes that we shall cut a figure.

Let us change the subject, said I, and talk of Oviedo. You have been in the Asturias. How did you leave my mother? Ah, sir! replied he, with an undertaker's decency of countenance, I have a melancholy tale to tell you from that quarter. O heaven! exclaimed I, my mother then is dead! Six months since, said my secretary, did the good lady pay the debt of nature, and your uncle, Signor Gil Perez, about the same period.

My mother's death preyed upon my susceptible nature, though in my childhood I had not received from her those little fondling indications of maternal love so necessary to amalgamate with the more serious convictions of filial duty. The good canon,

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too, came in for his share in bringing me up according to the rules of godliness and honesty. My serious grief was not lasting; but I never lost sight of a certain tender recollection, whenever the idea of my dear relations shot across my mind.

CHAPTER IX.

HOW MY LORD DUKE MARRIED HIS ONLY DAUGHTER, AND TO WHOM; WITH THE BITTER CONSEQUENCES OF THAT MARRIAGE.

VERY shortly after the son of Coeclina's return, my lord duke fell into a brown study; and it lasted a complete week. I conceived, of course, that he was brooding over some great measure of government; but family concerns were the object of his musings. Gil Blas, said he one day after dinner, you may perceive that my mind is a good deal distracted. Yes, my good friend, I am pondering over an affair of the utmost consequence to my feelings. You shall know all about it.

My daughter, Donna Maria, pursued he, is marriageable, and of course beset with suitors. The Count de Niéblés, eldest son of the Duke de Medina Sidonia, head of the Guzman family, and Don Lewis de Haro, eldest son of the Marquis de Carpio and my eldest sister, are the two most likely competitors. The latter, in particular, is superior in point of merit to all his rivals, so that the whole court has fixed on

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him for my son-in-law. Nevertheless, without entering into private motives for treating him, as well as the Count de Niéblés, with a refusal, my present views are fixed upon Don Ramires Nunez de Guzman, Marquis of Toral, head of the Guzmans d'Abrados, another branch of the family. To that nobleman and his progeny, by my daughter, I mean to leave all my property, and to entail on them the title of Count d'Olivarez, with the additional dignity of grandee; so that my grandchildren and their descendants, issue of the Abrados and Olivarez branch, will be considered as taking precedence in the house of Guzman.

Tell me now, Santillane, added he, do you not like my project? Excuse me, my lord, pleaded I, with a shrug; the design is worthy of the genius which gave birth to it: my only fear is, lest the Duke of Medina Sidonia should think fit to be out of humor at it. Let him take it as he list, resumed the minister; I give myself very little concern about that. His branch is no favorite with me: they have choused that of Abrados out of their precedence and many of their privileges. I shall be far less affected by his ill humors than by the disappointment of my sister, the Marchioness de Carpio, when she sees my daughter slip through her son's fingers. But let that be as it may, I am determined to please myself, and Don Ramires shall be the man; it is a settled point.

My lord duke, having announced this firm resolve, did not carry it into effect without giving a new proof

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of his singular policy. He presented a memorial to the king, entreating him and the queen, in concert, to do him the honor of taking the choice of a husband for his daughter on themselves, at the same time acquainting them with the pretensions of the suitors, and professing to abide by their election; but he took care, when naming the Marquis de Toral, to evince clearly whither his own wishes pointed. The king, therefore, with a blind deference for his minister, answered thus: —

"I think that Don Ramires Nunez deserves Donna Maria; but determine for yourself. The match of your own choosing will be most agreeable to me.

(Signed) THE KING."

The minister made a point of showing this answer everywhere; and affecting to consider it as a royal mandate, hastened his daughter's marriage with the Marquis de Toral; a death-blow to the hopes of the Marchioness de Carpio and the rest of the Guzmans who had been speculating on an alliance with Donna Maria. These rival players of a losing game, not being able to break off the match, put the best face they could upon it, and made the fashionable world to resound with their costly celebrations of the event. A superficial observer might have fancied that the whole family was delighted with the arrangement; but the pouters and ill-wishers were soon revenged most cruelly at my lord duke's expense. Donna Maria was brought to bed of a daughter at the end of ten months; the infant was still-born, and the mother died a few days afterwards.

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What a loss for a father who had no eyes, as one may say, but for his daughter, and in her loss felt the miscarriage of his design to quash the right of precedence in the branch of Medina Sidonia! Stung to the quick by his misfortune, he shut himself up for several days, and was visible to no one but myself; a sincere sympathizer, from the recollection of my own experience in his sorrow. The occasion drew forth fresh tears to Antonia's memory. The death of the Marchioness de Toral, under circumstances so similar, tore open a wound imperfectly skinned over, and so exasperated my affliction, that the minister, though he had enough to do with his own sufferings, could not help taking notice of mine. It seemed unaccountable how exactly his feelings were echoed. Gil Blas, said he one day, when my tears seemed to feed upon indulgence, my greatest consolation consists in having a bosom friend so much alive to all my distresses. Ah! my lord, answered I, giving him the full credit of my amiable tenderness, I must be ungrateful and degenerate in my nature if I did not lament as for myself. Can I be aware that you mourn over a daughter of accomplished merit, whom you loved so tenderly, without shedding tears of fellow-feeling? No, my lord, I am too much naturalized to you on the side of obligation not to take a permanent interest in all your pleasures and disappointments.

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CHAPTER X.

GIL BLAS MEETS WITH THE POET NUNEZ BY ACCIDENT, AND LEARNS THAT HE HAS WRITTEN A TRAGEDY, WHICH IS ON THE POINT OF BEING BROUGHT OUT AT THE THEATRE ROYAL. THE ILL FORTUNE OF THE PIECE, AND THE GOOD FORTUNE OF ITS AUTHOR.

The minister began to pick up his crumbs, and myself consequently to get into feather again, when one evening I went out alone in the carriage to take an airing. On the road I met the poet of the Asturias, who had been lost to my knowledge ever since his discharge from the hospital. He was very decently dressed. I called him up, gave him a seat in my carriage, and we drove together to St. Jerome's meadow.

Master Nunez, said I, it is lucky for me to have met you accidentally; for otherwise I should not have had the pleasure . . . No severe speeches, Santillane, interrupted he with considerable eagerness: I must own frankly that I did not mean to keep up your acquaintance, and I will tell you the reason. You promised me a good situation provided I abjured poetry; but I have found a very excellent one on condition of keeping my talents in constant play. I accepted the latter alternative, as squaring best with my own humor. A friend of mine got me an employment under Don Bertrand Gomez del Ribero, treasurer of the king's galleys. This Don Bertrand, wanting to have a wit in his pay, and find-

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ing my turn for poetical composition very much in unison with his own sense of what is excellent, has chosen me in preference to five or six authors who offered themselves as candidates for the place of his private secretary.

I am delighted at the news, my dear Fabricio, said I, for this Don Bertrand must be very rich. Rich indeed! answered he; they say that he does not know himself how much he is worth. However that may be, my business under him is as follows: He prides himself on his turn for gallantry, at the same time wishing to pass for a man of genius; he therefore keeps up an epistolary intercourse of wit with several ladies who have an infinite deal, and borrows my brain to indite such letters as may amplify the opinion of his sprightliness and elegance. I write to one for him in verse, to another in prose, and sometimes carry the letters myself, to prove the agility of my heels as well as the ingenuity of my head.

But you do not tell me, said I, what I most want to know. Are you well paid for your epigrammatic cards of compliment? Yes, most plentifully, answered he. Rich men are not always open-handed; and I know some who are downright curmudgeons; but Don Bertrand has behaved in the most handsome manner. Besides a salary of two hundred pistoles, I receive some little occasional perquisites from him, sufficient to set me above the world, and enable me to live on an equal footing with some choice spirits of the literary circles, who are willing, like myself, to set care at defiance. But then, resumed I, has your treasurer

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critical skill enough to distinguish the beauties of a performance from its blemishes? The least likely man in the world, answered Nunez; a flippant-tongued smatterer, with a miserable assortment of materials for judging. Yet he gives himself out for chief justice and lord president of Apollo's tribunal. His decisions are adventurous, if not always lucky; while his opinions are maintained in so high a tone and with so bullying a challenge of infallibility, that nine times out of ten the issue of an argument is silence, though not conviction, on the part of the opponent, as a measure of precaution against the gathering storm of foul language and contemptuous sneers.

You may readily suppose, continued he, that I take especial care never to contradict him, though it almost exceeds human patience to forbear; for, to say nothing of the unpalatable phrases that might be hailed down on my defenceless head, I should stand a very good chance of being shoved by the shoulders out of doors. I therefore am discreet enough to approve what he praises, and to condemn without mitigation or appeal whatever he is pleased to find fault with. By this easy compliance—for poets are compelled to acquire a knack of knocking under to those by whom they live, not even excepting their booksellers—I have gained the esteem and friendship of my patron. He has employed me to write a tragedy on a plot of his own. I have executed it under his inspection; and if the piece succeeds, a percentage on the laud and honor must accrue to him.

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I asked our poet what was the title of his tragedy. He informed me that it was "The Count of Saldagna," and that it would come out in two or three days. I told him that I wished it all possible success, and thought so favorably of his genius as to entertain considerable hopes. So do I, said he; but hope never tells a more flattering tale than in the ear of a dramatic author. You might as well attempt to fix the wind by nailing the weathercock as speculate on the reception of a new piece with an audience.

At length the day of performance arrived. I could not go to the play, being prevented by official business. The only thing to be done was to send Scipio, that he might bring me back word how it went off, for I was sincerely interested in the event. After waiting impatiently for his return, in he came with a long face, which boded no good. Well, said I, how was "The Count of Saldagna" welcomed by the critics? Very roughly, answered he; never was there a play more brutally handled; I left the house in high anger at the injustice and insolence of the pit. It serves him right, rejoined I. Nunez is no better than a madman, to be always running his head against the stone walls of a theatre. If he was in his senses, could he have preferred the hisses and catcalls of an unfeeling mob to the ease and dignity he might have commanded under my patronage? Thus did I inveigh with friendly vehemence against the poet of the Asturias, and disturb the even tenor of my mind for an event which the sufferer hailed with joy, and inserted among the well-omened particulars of his journal.

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He came to see me within two days, and appeared in high spirits. Santillane, cried he, I am come to receive your congratulations. My fortune is made, my friend, though my play is marred. You know what a mistake they made on the first and last night of "The Count of Saldagna;" hissed instead of applauding! You would have thought all the wild beasts of the forest had been let loose, with their ears fortified against the softening power of poetry; but the more they bellowed, the better I fared, and they have roared me into a provision for life.

There was no knowing what to make of this incident in the drama of our poet's adventures. What is all this, Fabricio? said I; how can theatrical damnation have conjured up such Elysian ecstasy? It is exactly so, answered he; I told you before that Don Bertrand had thrown in some of the circumstances; and he was fully convinced that there was no defect but in the taste of the spectators. They might be very good judges; but, if they were, he was no judge at all! Nunez, said he this morning,

Victrix causa Diis placuit, sed victa Catoni.*

Your piece has been ill received by the public; but against that you may place my entire approba-

* Members of parliament, and the ladies, will probably expect a translation of these hard words; but I refer the former to their dictionaries, to which they bade a long farewell on leaving Eton or Harrow, and the latter to an extended paraphrase of five acts in the tragedy of Cato. Those of the softer sex who may think the Stoic philosophy rude and uncouth, will feel their nerves vibrate in unison with the love scenes. TRANSLATOR.

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tion, and thus you ought to set your heart at rest. By way of something to balance the bad taste of the age, I shall settle an annuity of two thousand crowns on you: go to my solicitor, and let him draw the deed. We have been about it: the treasurer has signed and sealed; my first quarter is paid in advance . . .

I wished Fabricio joy on the unhappy fate of "The Count of Saldagna;" and probably most authors would have envied his failure more than all the success that ever succeeded. You are in the right, continued he, to prefer my fortune to my fame. What a lucky peal of disapprobation in double choir! If the public had chosen to ring the changes on my merits rather than my misdeeds, what would they have done for my pocket? A mere paltry nothing. The common pay of the theatre might have kept me from starving; but the wind of popular malice has blown me a comfortable pension, engrossed on safe and legal parchment.

CHAPTER XI.

LANTILLANE GIVES SCIPIO A SITUATION; THE LATTER SETS OUT FOR NEW SPAIN.

My secretary could not look at the unexpected good luck of Nunez the poet without envy; he talked of nothing else for a week. The whims of that

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baggage, fortune, said he, are most unaccountable: she delights to turn her lottery wheel into the lap of a sorry author, while she deals out her disappointments like a step-mother to the race of good ones. I should have no objection, though, if she would throw me up a prize in one of her vertical progresses. That is likely enough to happen, said I, and sooner than you imagine. Here you are in her temple; for it is scarcely too presumptuous to call the house of a prime minister the temple of fortune, where favors are conferred by wholesale, and votaries grow fat on the spoils of her altar. That is very true, sir, answered he; but we must have patience, and wait till the happy moment comes. Take my advice while it is worth having, Scipio, replied I, and make your mind easy: perhaps you are on the eve of some good appointment. And so it turned out; for within a few days an opportunity offered of employing him advantageously in my lord duke's service; and I did not suffer the happy moment to pass by.

I was engaged in chat one morning with Don Raymond Caporis, the prime minister's steward, and our conversation turned on the sources of his excellency's income. My lord, said he, enjoys the commanderies of all the military orders, yielding a revenue of forty thousand crowns a year; and he is only obliged to wear the cross of Alcantara. Moreover, his three offices of great chamberlain, master of the horse, and high chancellor of the Indies, bring him in an income of two hundred thousand crowns; and yet all this is nothing in comparison of the immense

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sums which he receives through other transatlantic channels; but you will be puzzled to guess how. When vessels clear out from Seville or Lisbon for those parts of the world, he ships wine, oil, grain, and other articles, the produce of his own estate; and his consignments are duty free. With that perquisite in his pocket, he sells his merchandise for four times its current price in Spain, and then lays out the money in spices, coloring materials, and other things which cost next to nothing in the new world, and are sold very dear in Europe. Already has he realized some millions by this traffic, without detracting from the dues of his royal master.

You will easily account for it, continued he, that the people concerned in carrying on this trade return with great fortunes in their pockets; for my lord thinks it but reasonable that they should divide their diligence between his business and their own.

That shrewd son of chance and opportunity, of whom we are speaking, overheard our conversation, and could not help interrupting Don Raymond to the following purport: Upon my word, Signor Caporis, I should like to be one of those people; for I am fond of travelling, and have long wished to see Mexico. Your inclinations as a tourist shall soon be gratified, said the steward, if Signor de Santillane will not stand in the way of your wishes. However particular I may think it my duty to be about the persons whom I send to the West Indies in that capa-

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city, — and they are all of my appointment, — you shall be placed on the list at all adventures, if your master wishes it. You will confer on me a particular favor, said I to Don Raymond; be so good as to do it in kindness to me. Scipio is a young fellow much in my good graces, very capable in business, and will be found irreproachable in his conduct. In a word, I would as soon answer for him as myself.

That being the case, replied Caporis, he has only to repair immediately to Seville: the ships are to sail for South America in a month. I shall give him a letter at his departure for a man who will put him in the way of making a fortune, without the slightest interference in his excellency's dues and profits, which ought to be held sacred by him.

Scipio, delighted with his berth, was in haste to set out for Seville, with a thousand crowns, with which I furnished him, to make purchases of wine and oil in Andalusia, and enable him to trade on his own bottom in the West Indies. And yet, overjoyed as he was to make a voyage, and as he hoped his fortune therewithal, he could not part from me without tears; and the separation raised the waters even from my dry fountains.

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CHAPTER XII.

DON ALPHONSO DE LEYVA COMES TO MADRID; THE MOTIVE OF HIS JOURNEY A SEVERE AFFLICTION TO GIL BLAS, AND A CAUSE OF REJOICING SUBSEQUENT THEREON.

No sooner had I parted with Scipio than one of the minister's pages brought me a note conceived in the following terms: "If Signor de Santillane will take the trouble of calling at the sign of Saint Gabriel, in the street of Toledo, he will there see a friend who is not indifferent to him."

Who can this nameless friend possibly be? said I to myself. What can be the meaning of all this mystery? Obviously to occasion me the pleasure of a surprise. I attended the summons immediately, and on my arrival at the place appointed, was not a little astonished to find Don Alphonso de Leyva there. Is it possible! exclaimed I: you here, my lord? Yes, my dear Gil Blas, answered he with a close compression of my hand in his, it is Don Alphonso himself. Well! but what brings you to Madrid? said I. You will be not a little startled, rejoined he, and no less vexed at the occasion of my journey. They have taken my government of Valencia from me, and the prime minister has sent for me to give an account of my conduct. For a whole quarter of an hour I was like a man stupefied; then, recovering the powers of speech, Of what, said I, are you accused? I know nothing at all about it, answered he; but my disgrace is probably owing to

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a visit paid about three weeks ago to the Cardinal Duke of Lerma, who was banished about a month since to his seat at Denia.

Yes, indeed! cried I in a pet, you may well attribute your misfortune to that imprudent visit: there is no occasion to look out for causes and effects elsewhere; but give me leave to say that you have not acted with your usual good sense, in claiming acquaintance with that favorite out of favor. The leap is taken, and the neck broken, said he; and I have nothing to do but to make the best of a bad bargain: I shall retire with my family to our paternal estate at Leyva, where the remnant of my days will glide away in peace and obscurity. What taunts and teases me is the requisition of appearing before a haughty minister, who may receive me with all the insolence of office. How humiliating to the pride of a Spaniard! And yet it is a measure of necessity; but before the degrading ceremony took place, I wanted to talk it over with you. Sir, said I, do not announce your arrival to the minister, till I have ascertained the nature of the reports to your discredit, for there are few evils without a remedy. Whatever may be your alleged crimes, you will give me leave, if you please, to act in the affair as gratitude and friendship shall dictate. With this assurance, I left him at his inn, and promised to let him hear from me soon.

As I had taken no active part in state affairs since the two memorials, in which my eloquence was so signally displayed, I went to look for Carnero, with

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a view to inquire whether Don Alphonso's government was really taken from him. He answered in the affirmative, but professed not to know the reason. Finding how things stood, I determined to apply at head-quarters, and to learn the grounds of grievance from his lordship's own mouth.

My spirits were really harassed, so that there was no need of putting on the trappings and the suits of woe, to attract my lord duke's notice. What is the matter, Santillane? said he as soon as he saw me. I perceive a marked unhappiness on your countenance, and tears just ready to trickle down your cheeks. Has any one behaved ill to you? Tell me, and you shall have your revenge. My lord, answered I in a melancholy tone, even though my grief would seek to hide itself, it must have vent: my despair is past endurance. The report goes that Don Alphonso is no longer governor of Valencia; a severer stroke could not have been inflicted on me. What say you, Gil Blas? replied the minister in astonishment: what interest can you take in this Don Alphonso and his government? On this question, I detailed at length my obligations to the lords of Leyva, and modestly stated my own interference with the Duke of Lerma, to obtain the appointment for my friend.

When his excellency had heard me through with the most polite and kind attention, he spoke thus: Make yourself easy, Gil Blas. Besides my entire ignorance of what you have just told me, I must own that I considered Don Alphonso as the cardinal's creature. Only put yourself in my place: was not

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the visit to his eminence a most suspicious circumstance? Yet I am willing to believe that, owing his preferment to that minister, he might have remembered him in his adversity from a motive of pure gratitude. I am sorry for having displaced a man who owed his elevation to you; but if I have pulled down your handiwork I can build it up again. I mean to do still more than the Duke of Lerma for you. Your friend Don Alphonso was only governor of Valencia; I appoint him viceroy of Arragon: you may send him word so yourself, and order him hither to take the oaths.

At these words, my feelings changed from extreme grief to an excess of joy, which completely caricatured the mediocrity of common sense, and made me utter an incoherent rhapsody of thanks: but the want of method in the madness of my discourse was not taken amiss; and on my hinting that Don Alphonso was already at Madrid, he told me that I might present him this very day. I ran to the sign of Saint Gabriel, and communicated my own raptures to Don Cæsar's son, by informing him of his new appointment. He could not believe what I told him, but found it a hard matter to persuade himself that the prime minister, though likely enough to be very well disposed towards me, should extend his friendship so far as to dispose of viceroyalties at my instance. I carried him with me to my lord duke, who received him very affably, complimented him on his uniform good conduct in his government of Valencia, and finished by saying that the king, consider-

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ing him as qualified for a higher station, had named him for the viceroyalty of Arragon. Besides, added he, your family is of a rank not to disparage the dignity of the office, so that the Arragonese nobility will have no plea for excepting against the choice of the court.

His excellency made no mention of me, and the public was kept in the dark as to my share in the business; indeed, this prudent silence was lucky both for Don Alphonso and the minister, since the tongues of defamers would have been busy in taking to pieces the pretensions of a viceroy who owed his preferment to my patronage.

As soon as Don Cæsar's son could speak with certainty of his new honors, he sent off an express for Valencia with the information to his father and Seraphina, who soon arrived in Madrid. Their first object was to find me out, and ply me thick and threefold with acknowledgments. What a proud and affecting sight for me, to behold the three persons in the world nearest my heart, vying with each other in their testimonies of affection and gratitude! The pleasure my zeal seemed personally to give them was equal to the dignity conferred on their house by the post of viceroy. They even talked with me on a footing of equality, and scarcely remembered my original distance or servitude in the fervor of their present feelings. But not to dwell on unnecessary topics, Don Alphonso, having taken the oaths and returned thanks, left Madrid with his family, to take up his abode at Saragossa. He

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made his public entry with appropriate magnificence; and the Arragonese caused it to appear, by their cordial reception, that I had a very pretty knack at picking out a viceroy.

CHAPTER XIII.

GIL BLAS MEETS DON GASTON DE COGOLLOS AND DON ANDREW DE TORDESILLAS AT THE DRAWING-ROOM, AND ADJOURNS WITH THEM TO A MORE CONVENIENT PLACE. THE STORY OF DON GASTON AND DONNA HELENA DE GALISTEO CONCLUDED. SANTILLANE RENDERS SOME SERVICE TO TORDESILLAS.

I WAS up to the hilts in joy at having so marvellously metamorphosed an ex-governor into a viceroy; the lords of Leyva themselves were not primed and loaded so near to bursting. But very soon I had another opportunity of employing my credit in the beaten track of friendship; and there is the more occasion to quote these instances, that my readers may clearly discern with how different a man they are in company, from that graceless Gil Blas, who, under the former ministry, carried on a shameless traffic in the honors and emoluments of the state.

One day I was waiting in the king's antechamber, in conversation with some noblemen, who, knowing me to stand well with the prime minister, were not ashamed of taking me by the hand. In the crowd was Don Gaston de Cogollos, whom I had left a prisoner

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in the tower of Segovia. He was with Don Andrew de Tordesillas, the warden. I readily quitted my company to go and renew my acquaintance with my two friends. If they were astonished at the sight of me, I was no less so to find them here. After mutual greetings, Don Gaston said, Signor de Santillane, we have many inquiries to make of each other, and this place affords little opportunity for private intercourse; allow me to request your company where we may open our hearts freely. I made no objection; we pushed our way through the crowd, and left the palace. Don Gaston's carriage was ready waiting in the street: we all three got into it, and drove to the great market-place, where the bull-fights are exhibited. There Cogollos lived in a very handsome house.

Signor Gil Blas, said Don Andrew on our entrance, at your departure from Segovia you seemed to have conceived a thorough hatred against the court, and to have formed a settled purpose of abandoning it forever. Such was, in fact, my design, answered I; nor were my sentiments at all changed during the lifetime of the late king; but when the prince his son came to the throne, I had a mind to see whether the new monarch would know me again. He did so, and received me favorably, with a strong recommendation to the prime minister, who admitted me to his friendship, and took me more into his confidence than ever did the Duke of Lerma. This, Signor Don Andrew, is my story. And now tell me whether you still hold your office in the tower

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of Segovia. No, indeed, answered he; my lord duke has removed me, and put another in my room. He probably considered me as entirely devoted to his predecessor. And I, said Don Gaston, was set at liberty for the contrary reason; the prime minister was no sooner informed that my imprisonment was by the Duke of Lerma's order, than he ordered me to be released. The present business, Signor Gil Blas, is to relate the subsequent particulars of my adventures.

The first thing I did, continued he, after thanking Don Andrew for his kind attentions during my confinement, was to repair to Madrid. I presented myself before the Count Duke of Olivarez, who said, You need not be apprehensive of any blemish on your character in consequence of your late misfortune; you are honorably acquitted: nay, your innocence is so much the more satisfactorily established, as the Marquis of Villareal, with whom you were supposed to be implicated, was not guilty. Though a Portuguese, and related to the Duke of Braganza, he is less in his interests than in those of the king my master. That connection, therefore, ought not to have been imputed to you as a crime; but, to repair your wrongs, the king has given you a lieutenant's commission in the Spanish guards. This I accepted, begging it as a favor of his excellency to allow me, before I joined my regiment, to go and see my aunt, Donna Eleonora de Laxarilla, at Coria. The minister gave me leave of absence for a month, and I departed with only one servant.

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We had got beyond Colmenar, and were threading a narrow pass between two mountains, when we came within sight of a gentleman defending himself bravely against three men, who all fell upon him together. I did not hesitate about going to his aid, but hastened forward and planted myself by his side. I remarked, while we were fighting, that our enemies were masked, and that we had to do with expert swordsmen. But we triumphed over the united advantages of their skill and disparity. I ran one of the three through the body; he fell from his horse, and the two others immediately betook themselves to flight. The victory indeed was scarcely less fatal to us than to the wretch whom I had killed, for we were both dangerously wounded. But conceive my surprise, when I discovered the gentleman to be Combados, the husband of Donna Helena. He was no less astonished at recognizing me as his defender. Ah, Don Gaston! exclaimed he, was it you, then, who came to my assistance? When you took my part so generously, you little thought it was the person who had snatched your mistress from you. I really did not know it, answered I; but though I had, do you think I could have wavered about doing as I have done? Can you entertain so ill an opinion of me as to believe my soul so sordid? No, no, replied he; I think better of you; and should I die of my wounds, it will be my prayer that yours may not disable you from profiting by my death. Combados, said I, though I have not yet forgotten Donna Helena, know that I do not pant after the possession

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of her charms at the expense of your life; so far from it, that I congratulate myself on having contributed to your rescue from assassination, since by so doing I have performed an acceptable service to your wife.

While we were communing together, my servant dismounted, and drawing near to the gentleman stretched at his length, took off his mask, when Combados, with sensations of gratitude for his deliverance, distinctly traced the features. It is Caprara, exclaimed he; that treacherous cousin, who, in mere disgust at having missed a rich inheritance which he had unjustly disputed with me, has long since cherished a murderous design against my life, and fixed on this day to put it in execution; but heaven has turned him over to its determined vengeance, and made him the victim of his own attempt.

While this conversation was going on, our blood was flowing at the same rate, and we were becoming more exhausted every minute. Nevertheless, disabled as we were, we had strength enough to reach the town of Villarejo, which lies within a gunshot or two from the field of battle. At the very first house of call we sent for surgeons. The most expert came at our summons. He examined our wounds, and reported them as dangerous. After taking off the bandages and dressing them a second time, he pronounced those of Don Blas to be mortal. Of mine he thought more favorably, and the event corresponded with his prognostic.

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Combados, finding himself consigned to the grave, thought only of due preparation for a most serious event. He sent an express to his wife, with an account of what had happened, particularizing his present sad condition. Donna Helena soon arrived at Villarejo. Her mind was drawn different ways by two opposite occasions of distress—the hazard of her husband's life, and the fear of feeling the revival of a half extinguished flame at the sight of me. This sight occasioned her to experience a terrible agitation. Madam, said Don Blas when she appeared in his presence, you are come just in time to receive my farewell. I am at the point of death, and I consider my fate as a punishment from heaven for having taken you from Don Gaston by a feint; far from murmuring at it, I exhort you with my last breath to restore to him a heart which I had stolen from him. Donna Helena answered him only by her tears; and indeed it was the best answer she could make; for she had neither forgotten her first love, nor the artifices whereby she had been influenced to renounce her plighted faith.

It happened, as the surgeon had anticipated, that in less than three days Combados died of his wounds, while mine, on the contrary, wore the appearance of convalescence. The young widow, whom no earthly considerations could detach from the care of transporting her late husband's remains to Coria, that they might be deposited with due honors in the family vault, left Villarejo on her return, after inquiring, merely as a matter of course, how I was

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going on. As soon as I was well enough to be removed, I bent my course to Coria, where my recovery was soon ascertained. My aunt, Donna Eleonora, and Don George de Galisteo, were determined that my marriage with Helena should take place forthwith, lest some new caprice of fortune should part us once more. The ceremony was privately performed, on account of the late melancholy event, and within a few days I returned to Madrid with Donna Helena. As my leave of absence had expired, I was afraid lest the minister should have superseded me in my lieutenancy; but he had not filled up the vacancy, and received my apologies very graciously.

Thus am I, continued Cogollos, lieutenant of the Spanish guards, and my situation is exactly to my mind. The circle of my friends is respectable and pleasant, and I live at my ease among them. Would I could say as much! exclaimed Don Andrew; but I am very far from being satisfied with my lot: I have lost my appointment, which was not without its advantages, and have no friends of sufficient interest to procure me a better berth. Excuse me, Signor Don Andrew, cried I, with a sort of upbraiding smile, you have a friend in me who may chance to be better than no friend at all. I have told you already that I am a greater favorite with my lord duke than with the Duke of Lerma; and will you tell me to my face that you have no interest at court? Have you not already experienced the contrary? Recollect that, through the Archbishop of Grenada's powerful recommendation, I procured you a nomination for

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Mexico, where you would have made your fortune, if love had not stepped in and marred it at Alicant. My means are now more extensive; since I have the ear of the prime minister. I give myself up to you then, replied Tordesillas; but do not send me into New Spain, though the first appointment in the colonies were at your disposal.

Here we were interrupted by Donna Helena, who came into the room, and improved even upon the visions of my fancy by the reality of her charms. Cogollos introduced me as the companion who had solaced the tedious hours of his imprisonment. Yes, madam, said I to Donna Helena, my conversation did indeed soothe his sorrows, for it turned on you. The compliment was not thrown away, and I took my leave with repeated congratulations. With respect to Tordesillas, I assured him that within a week he should know how far my power, as well as will, extended.

Nor were these mere words. On the very next day, the opportunity occurred. Santillane, said his excellency, the place of governor in the royal prison of Valladolid is vacant: it is worth more than three hundred pistoles a year, and is yours if you will accept of it. Not if it were worth ten thousand ducats, answered I, for it would carry me away from your lordship. But, replied the minister, you may fill it by deputy, and only visit occasionally. That is as it may be, rejoined I; but I shall only accept it on condition of resigning in favor of Don Andrew de Tordesillas, a brave and loyal gentleman; I

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should like to give him this place in acknowledgment of his kindness to me in the tower of Segovia.

This plea made the minister laugh heartily, and say, As far as I see, Gil Blas, you mean to make yourself a general patron. Even so be it, my friend; the vacancy is yours for Tordesillas; but tell me unfeignedly what fellow-feeling you have in the business, for you are not such a fool as to throw away your interest for nothing. My lord, answered I, Don Andrew charged me nothing for all his acts of friendship; and should not a man repay his obligations? You are become highly moral and self-mortified, replied his excellency; rather more so than under the last administration. Precisely so, rejoined I; then evil communication corrupted my principles; bargain and sale were the order of the day, and I conformed to the established practice: now, all preferment is allotted on the footing of a meritorious free gift, and my integrity shall not be the last to fall in with the fashion.

CHAPTER XIV.

SANTILLANE'S VISIT TO POET NUNEZ; THE COMPANY AND CONVERSATION.

One day, after dinner, a fancy seized me to go and see the poet of the Asturias, feeling a sort of curiosity to know on what floor he lodged. I re-

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paired to the house of Signor Don Bertrand Gomez del Ribero, and asked for Nunez. He does not live here now, said the porter, but over the way, in apartments at the back of the house. I went thither, and, crossing a small court, entered an unfurnished parlor, where my friend Fabricio was sitting at table, doing the honors to five or six guests from the hamlet and liberty of Parnassus.

They were at the latter end of a feast, and of course at the beginning of an affray; but as soon as they perceived me, a dead silence succeeded to their obstreperous argumentation. Nunez rose from his seat with much pomp and circumstance of politeness to receive me, saying, Gentlemen, Signor de Santillane! He does me the honor to visit me under this humble roof; as the favorite of the prime minister, you will all join with me in tendering your humble services. At this introduction, the worshipful company got up and made their best bows; for my rank could not fail of procuring me respect from the manufacturers of dedications. Though I was neither hungry nor thirsty, it was impossible not to sit down and drink a toast in such society.

My presence appearing to be a restraint, Gentlemen, said I, it should seem that I have interrupted your conversation: resume it, or you drive me away. My learned friends, said Fabricio, were discussing the "Iphigenia" of Euripides. The bachelor, Melchior de Villégas, a clever man of the first rank in the republic of letters, resumed the topic by asking Don Jacinto de Romerate which was the point of

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interest in that tragedy. Don Jacinto ascribed it to the imminent danger of Iphigenia. The bachelor contended, offering to prove his proposition by all the evidence admissible at the bar of logic or criticism, that the danger of a trumpery girl had nothing to do with the real sympathy of that affecting piece. What has to do with it then? bawled the old licentiate Gabriel of Leon, indignantly. It turns with the wind, replied the bachelor.

The whole company burst into a shout of laughter at this assertion, which they were far from considering as serious; and I myself thought that Melchior had only launched it by way of adding the zest of wit to the severity of critical discussion. But I was out in my calculation respecting the character of that eminent scholar: he had not a grain of sprightliness or pleasantry in his whole composition. Laugh as you please, gentlemen, replied he, very coolly; I maintain that there is no circumstance but the wind, unless it be the weathercock, to interest, to strike, to rouse the passions of the spectator. Figure to yourselves a multitudinous army assembled for the purpose of laying siege to Troy; take into the account the eager haste of the officers and common men to carry their enterprise into execution, that they may return with their best legs foremost into Greece, where they have left everything most dear to them — their household gods, their wives and their children: all this while a mischievous wind from the wrong quarter keeps them port-bound at Aulis, and, as it were, drives a nail into the very

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head of the expedition; so that, till better weather, it was impossible to go and lay siege to Priam's town. Wind and weather, therefore, make up the interest of this tragedy. My good wishes are with the Greeks; my whole faculties are wrapped up in the success of their design; the sailing of their fleet is with me the only hinge of the fable, and I look at the danger of Iphigenia with somewhat of a self-interested complacency, because by her death the winding up of the story into a brisk and favorable gale was likely to be accelerated.

As soon as Villégas had finished his criticism, the laugh burst out more than ever at his expense. Nunez was sly enough to side with him, that a fairer scope and broader mark might be presented to the shafts of malicious wit which were let fly from all the quarters in the shipman's card at this poster of the sea and land. But the bachelor, eying them all with sublime indifference and supreme contempt, gave them to understand how low in the list of the ignorant and vulgar they ranked in his estimation. Every moment did I expect to see these vaporing spirits kindle into a blaze, and wage war against the hairy honors of each other's brainless skulls; but the joke was not carried to that length: they confined their hostilities to opprobrious epithets, and took their leave when they had eaten and drunk as much as they could get.

After their departure, I asked Fabricio why he had separated himself from his treasurer, and whether they had quarrelled. Quarrelled! answered he:

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Heaven defend me from such a misfortune! I am on better terms than ever with Signor Don Bertrand, who gave his consent to my living apart from him: here, therefore, I receive my friends, and take my pleasure with them unmolested. You know very well that I am not of a temper to lay up treasures for those who are to come after me; and as it happens luckily, I am now in circumstances to give my little classical entertainments every day. I am delighted at it, my dear Nunez, replied I, and once more wish you joy on the success of your last tragedy: the great Lope, by his eight hundred dramatic pieces, never made a quarter of the money which you have got by the damnation of your "Count de Saldagna."

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BOOK THE TWELFTH.

CHAPTER I.

GIL BLAS SENT TO TOLEDO BY THE MINISTER. THE PURPOSE OF HIS JOURNEY AND ITS SUCCESS.

For nearly a month his excellency had been saying to me every day, Santillane, the time is approaching when I shall call your choicest powers of address into action; but the time that was coming never came. It is a long lane, however, where there is no turning; and his excellency at length spoke to me nearly as follows: They say that there is, in the company of comedians at Toledo, a young actress of much note for her personal and professional fascinations; it is affirmed that she dances and sings like all the Muses and Graces put together, and that the whole theatre rings with applause at her performance: to these perfections is added matchless and irresistible beauty. Such a star should only shine within the circle of a court. The king has a taste for the stage, for music, and for dancing; nor must he be debarred from the pleasure of seeing and hearing such a prodigy. I have determined on sending you to Toledo, that you may judge for yourself whether she really is so extraordinary an actress: on your feeling of her merit my measures shall be

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taken; for I have unlimited confidence in your discernment.

I undertook to bring his lordship a good account of this business, and made my arrangements for setting out with one servant, but not in the minister's livery, by way of conducting matters more warily; and that precaution relished well with his excellency. On my arrival at Toledo, I had scarcely alighted at the inn, when the landlord, taking me for some country gentleman, said, Please your honor, you are probably come to be present at the august ceremony of an Auto da Fé to-morrow. I answered in the affirmative, the more completely to mislead him and keep my own counsel. You will see, replied he, one of the prettiest processions you ever saw in your life: there are said to be more than a hundred prisoners, and ten of them are to be roasted.

In good truth, next morning, before sunrise, I heard all the bells in the town peal merrily; and the design of their bob-majors was to acquaint the people that the pastime was about to begin. Curious to see what sort of a recreation it was, I dressed in a hurry, and posted to the scene of action. All about that quarter, and along the streets where the procession was to pass, were scaffolds, on one of which I purchased a standing. The Dominicans walked first, preceded by the banner of the inquisition. These Christian fathers were immediately followed by the hapless victims of the holy office selected for this day's burnt-offering. These devoted wretches walked one by one, with their head and

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feet bare, each of them with a taper in his hand, and a fiery, not baptismal godfather by his side. Some had large yellow scapularies, worked with crosses of St. Andrew in red; others wore sugar-loaf caps of paper, illustrated with flames and diabolical figures of all sorts by way of emblem.

As I looked narrowly at these objects of religious gaze, with a compassion in my heart which might have been construed criminal, had it run over from my eyes, I fancied that the reverend Father Hilary and his companion brother Ambrose were among those who figured in the sugar-loaf caps. They passed too near for me to be deceived. What do I see? thought I inwardly. Heaven, wearied out with the wicked lives of these two scoundrels, has given them up to the justice of the inquisition! My whole frame trembled at the thought, and my spirits were scarcely equal to support me from fainting. My connection with these knaves, the adventure at Xelva, all our pranks in partnership rushed upon my memory, and I did not know how sufficiently to thank God for having preserved me from St. Andrew's crosses and the painted devils on the paper caps.

When the ceremony was over, I returned to the inn with my heart sickening at the dreadful sight; but painful impressions soon wear away, and I thought only of my commission and its due accomplishment. I waited with impatience for play-time, as the moment and scene of my commencing operations. On the opening of the doors I repaired to the

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theatre, and took my seat next to a knight of Alcantara. We soon got into chat. Sir, said I, the players here have been represented to me in very favorable terms: may I give credit to general report? The company is not contemptible, replied the knight: they have some first-rate performers; among the rest, the peerless Lucretia, an actress of fourteen, who will astonish you; and she plays one of her best parts to-night.

On the drawing up of the curtain, two actresses came on, with every advantage of dress and stage effect; but neither of them could possibly be the object of my search. At length Lucretia made her appearance at the back scene, and walked forwards amidst a thunder of applause. Ah! this is she, indeed! thought I; and a delicate specimen of loveliness, as I am a sinner! In her very first speech she proved herself a child of nature, with energy and conception far above her years; and the approbation of a provincial audience was confirmed by my metropolitan judgment. The knight was happy to find I liked her, and assured me that if I had heard her sing, my ears might have rejoiced to the sorrow of my heart. Her dancing, too, he represented as not less formidable to the free will of lordly man. I inquired what youth, blessed as the immortal gods, had the exquisite happiness of bringing himself to beggary for so sweet a girl. She is under no avowed protection, said he; and scandal has not coupled her name with private license; but Lucretia must take care of herself, for she is under the wing of her aunt Estella;

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and there is not an actress in the company so warmly fledged for hatching the tender passions into life.

At the name of Estella, I inquired with some eagerness who she was. One of our best performers, said my informant. She does not play to-night, to our great loss, for her cast is that of abigails, and she humors them to perfection. A little too broad, perhaps, but that is a fault on the right side. From the features of the description, there could be no doubt but this must be Laura; that lady so notorious in these memoirs, whom I left at Grenada.

To make assurance doubly sure, I went behind the scenes after the play. There she was, in the green-room, flirting with some men of fashion, who probably endured the aunt for the sake of the niece. I came up to pay my devotions; but whim, or perhaps revenge for my cutting and running from Grenada, determined her to put on the stranger, and receive my compliments with so discouraging a coldness as to throw me into some little confusion. Instead of laughing it off, I was fool enough to be angry, and withdrew in a choleric determination to return next day. Laura shall smart for this! said I; her niece shall not appear at court; I will tell the minister that she dances like a she bear, has formed her *bravura* between the scream of a pea-hen and the cackle of a goose, acts like a puppet, and comprehends like an idiot.

Such was my scheme of revenge, but it proved abortive. Just as I was going out of town, a footboy brought me the following note: "Forget and for-

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give, and follow the bearer." I obeyed, and found Laura at her dressing-table in very elegant apartments near the theatre.

She rose to welcome me, saying, Signor Gil Blas, you have every reason to be offended at your reception behind the scenes, which was out of character between such old friends; but I really was most abominably disconcerted. Just as you came up, one of our gentlemen had brought me some scandalous stories about my niece, whose honor has always been dearer to me than my own. On coming to myself, I immediately sent my servant to find you out, with the intention of making you amends today. You have done so already, my dear Laura, said I; let us therefore talk over old times. You may remember that I left you in a very ticklish predicament, when conscience and the fear of punishment drove me so precipitately from Grenada. How did you get off with your Portuguese lover? Easily enough, answered Laura: do not you know that in those cases men are mere fools, and acquit us women without even calling for our defence?

I faced the Marquis of Marialva out that you were my very brother, and drew upon my impudence for the support of my credit. Do you not see, said I to my Portuguese dupe, that this is all the contrivance of jealousy and rage? My rival, Narcissa, infuriated at my possession of a heart which she had vainly attempted to gain, has bribed the candle-snuffer to assert that he has seen me as Arsenia's waiting-woman at Madrid. It is an abominable false-

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hood; the widow of Don Antonio Coello has always been too high in her notions to be the hanger-on of a theatrical mistress. Besides, what completely disproves the whole allegation is my brother's precipitate retreat: if he were here, it would be a subject of evidence; but Narcissa must have devised some stratagem to get him out of the way.

These reasons, continued Laura, were not the most convincing in the world, but they did very well for the marquis; and that good, easy nobleman continued his confidence till his return to Portugal. This happened soon after your departure; and Zapata's wife had the pleasure of seeing me lose what she could not win. After this, I staid some years longer at Grenada, till the company was broken up in consequence of some squabbles, which will take place in mimic as well as in real life: some went to Seville, others to Cordova; and I came to Toledo, where I have been for these ten years with my niece Lucretia, whose performance you must have seen last night.

This was too much to be taken gravely. Laura inquired why I laughed. Can that be a question? said I. You have neither brother nor sister, one or other of which is a necessary ingredient in an aunt. Besides, when I calculate in my mind the lapse of time since our last separation, and compare that period with the age of your niece, it is more than possible that your relationship may be in a nearer degree of kin.

I understand you, replied Don Antonio's widow, with something like a moral tinge of red in her

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cheek; you are an accurate chronologist! There is no garbling facts in defiance of your memory. Well then! Lucretia is my daughter by the Marquis of Marialva: it was extremely wrong, but I cannot conceal it from you. The confession must indeed be a shock to your modesty, said I, after telling me yourself what pranks you played with the hospital steward at Zamora. I must tell you moreover that Lucretia is an article of so superior a quality, as to render you a public benefactor by having thrown her into the market. It were to be wished that the stolen embraces of all your fraternity might be blessed with fruitfulness, if they could secure to themselves a patent for breeding after your sample.

Should any sarcastic reader, comparing this passage with some circumstances related while I was the marquis's secretary, suspect me of being entitled to dispute the honors of paternity with that nobleman, I blush to say that my claims are entirely out of the question.

I laid open my principal adventures to Laura in my turn, as well as the present state of my affairs. She listened with interest, and said, Friend Santillane, you seem to play a principal part on the stage of the world, and I congratulate you most heartily. Should Lucretia be engaged at Madrid, I flatter myself she will find a powerful protector in Signor de Santillane. Doubt it not, answered I: your daughter may have her engagement whenever you please: I can promise you that, without presuming too much on my interest. I take you at your word, replied

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Laura, and would set out to-morrow, were I not under articles to this company. An order from court will cut the knot of any articles, rejoined I; and that I take upon myself: you shall have it within a week. It is an act of chivalry to rescue Lucretia from Toledo: such a pretty little actress belongs to the royal court, as parcel of the manor.

Lucretia came into the room just as I was talking of her. The goddess Hebe herself never looked better in her best days: it was nature in the bud, exhaling the sweets of her earliest bloom, but promising a more luxuriant waste of treasure. She was just up; and her natural beauty, without the aid of art, communicated the most rapturous sensations. Come, niece, said her mother, thank the gentleman for all his kindness to us: he is an old friend of mine, who ranks high at court, and undertakes to get us both an engagement at the theatre royal. The little girl seemed to be much pleased, and made me a low courtesy, saying, with an enchanting smile, I most humbly thank you for your obliging intention; but, by taking me from a partial audience, are you certain that I shall not be looked down upon by that of Madrid? I may but lose by the exchange. I remember hearing my aunt say that she has seen players most favorably received in one town, and hissed off the stage in another: this absolutely frightens me; beware, therefore, of exposing me to the derision of the court, and yourself to its reproaches. Lovely Lucretia, answered I, we have neither of us anything to fear; I am rather appre-

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hensive, lest, by the havoc you will make among hearts, you should excite rivalships and kindle discord among the courtiers. My niece's fears, said Laura, are better founded than yours; but I hope they will both prove vain: however feeble may be Lucretia's charms of person, her talents as an actress are at least above mediocrity.

We continued the conversation for some time; and I could gather, from Lucretia's share in it, that she was a girl of superior talents. On taking leave, I assured them that they should immediately receive a summons to Madrid.

CHAPTER II.

SANTILLANE MAKES HIS REPORT TO THE MINISTER, WHO COMMISSIONS HIM TO SEND FOR LUCRETIA. THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF THAT ACTRESS BEFORE THE COURT.

On my return, I found my lord duke impatient to be informed of my success. Have you seen her? said he: is she worth transplanting? My lord, answered I, fame, which generally runs beyond all discretion in its report of beauty, has erred on the side of parsimony in its estimate of the matchless young Lucretia; she is all that youthful poets fancy when they feign, for personal attractions, and all that veteran managers seek when they sign articles, in scenic qualifications.

Is it possible? exclaimed the minister with a

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satisfaction which involuntarily peeped out at his eyes, and made me think he had some selfish hankerings after the article of my marketing at Toledo; is it possible? and is she really so charming a creature? When you see her, replied I, you will own that any verbal picture of her perfections must be altogether inadequate to their due description. His excellency then requiring a minute account of my journey, I gave him all the particulars, not excepting Laura's story, and Lucretia's parentage. His lordship was delighted at the latter circumstance, and enjoined me, with a cordial compliment on my skill in such delicate negotiations, to finish as auspiciously as I had begun my undertaking.

I went to look for Carnero, and told him that it was his excellency's pleasure he should make out an order for the admission of Estella and Lucretia, actresses from the Toledo theatre, into his majesty's company. Say you so, Signor de Santillane? answered Carnero with a sarcastic leer; you shall not be kept long in suspense, since you take so marked an interest in the fortunes of these two ladies. He expedited the order in my presence, and within a week the mother and daughter sent me notice of their arrival. I immediately hastened to their lodging near the theatre, and after an interchange of thanks on their part, and assurances of continued support on mine, left them with my best wishes for a brilliant career of success.

Their names were announced in the bills as two new actresses, engaged by the special mandate of the

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court. They made their first appearance in a play which they had been accustomed to perform in at Toledo with loud and unanimous applause.

Novelty is the very life and soul of theatrical entertainments. The house was uncommonly crowded, and I, of course, was among the audience. I was rather frightened before the curtain drew up. Prejudiced as I was in favor of the candidates, my alarm was in proportion to my interest. But when once they were fairly on the boards, the din of welcome quieted all my apprehensions. Estella was considered as a first-rate actress in comic parts, and Lucretia as a female Roscius in heroines and love-sick damsels. But the love which she feigned herself she really kindled in the hearts of the spectators. Some admired the beauty of her eyes, others were touched with the plaintive sweetness of her voice, and all, bowing to the triumph of youth, vivacity, and elegance, went away in raptures with her person.

My lord duke, who took an uncommon interest in this threatrical event, was at the play that evening. I saw him leave his box at the end of the piece with evident approbation of our new performers. Curious to know whether they equalled his expectations, I followed him home, and into his closet, saying, Well, my lord, is your excellency well pleased with little Marialva? My excellency, answered he with a sly smile, must be very difficult to be pleased, not to confirm the public voice: yes, indeed, my good friend, I am enraptured with your Lucretia, and firmly believe that the king will not see her without emotion.

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CHAPTER III.

LUCRETIA'S POPULARITY; HER APPEARANCE BEFORE THE KING; HIS PASSION, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

GREAT was the noise about the court on this double acquisition to the theatre; it became the topic of conversation next day at the king's levee. The young Lucretia was most in the mouths of the nobility, who described her so feelingly, that his majesty could not but imbibe the impression, though he was too polite to express his interest either in words or by looks.

To make amends for that restraint, he questioned the minister as soon as he was alone with him, who stated the success of a young actress from Toledo on the evening before. Her name, added he, is Lucretia; and it is really a pity that ladies of her profession should ever have been christened by any less chaste appellative. She is an acquaintance of Santillane, who spoke so highly of her, that I thought it right to engage her for your majesty's company. The king smiled at the mention of my name, recollecting, perhaps, through what channel he became acquainted with Catalina, and foreboding a like assistance on the present occasion. Count, said he to the minister, I mean to see this Lucretia act tomorrow, and will thank you to let her know it.

I was, of course, sent with this intelligence to the two actresses. Great news! said I to Laura, whom

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I saw first: you will have the sovereign of the Spanish monarchy among your audience to-morrow, as the minister has desired me to inform you. I cannot doubt but you will both of you do your best to prove yourselves worthy of a royal command; but I would advise you to choose a piece with music and dancing, that all Lucretia's accomplishments may be displayed at one view. We will take your counsel, answered Laura, and it shall not be our faults if his majesty is disappointed. That can scarcely happen, said I, seeing Lucretia come into the room in an undress, which showed her person to more advantage than all the wardrobe of the theatre: he will be the more delighted with your lovely niece, because dancing and music are his principal pleasures: he may even be tempted to throw her the handkerchief. I do not at all wish, replied Laura, that he should be that way inclined; all-powerful monarch as he is, he might not find the accomplishment of his desires so easy. Lucretia, though brought up behind the scenes, is not without virtuous principles; whatever pleasure she may take in applause and professional reputation, she had much rather preserve the character of a good girl than establish that of a great actress.

Aunt, said little Marialva, joining in the conversation, why conjure up monsters only to lay them again? I shall never be at a loss to repel the king's advances, because his taste is too refined to stoop so low. But, charming Lucretia, said I, if such a thing should happen, would you be cruel enough to

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let him languish like a common lover? Why not? answered she. Setting virtue aside, my vanity would be more flattered by my own resistance than by the tribute of his affection. I was not a little surprised to hear a pupil of Laura's school talk so properly, and to find that with so free an education she imbibed such unusual principles of morality.

The king, impatient to see Lucretia, went to the play next evening. The piece was got up with music and dancing, to show our young actress off to the best advantage. My eyes were fixed on his majesty; but he completely eluded my penetration by an obstinate gravity. On the following day, the minister said, Santillane, I have just been with the king, who has been talking about Lucretia with so much animation, that I doubt not but he is smitten; and, as I told him that you had sent for her from Toledo, he expressed a wish to confer with you in private on the subject: orders are given for your admittance; run, and bring me back an account of what passes.

I flew to the palace, and found the king alone. He was walking up and down, in much apparent perplexity. He put several questions to me about Lucretia, made me relate her history, and then asked whether the little jade had not been tampering with chastity already. I boldly assured him to the contrary, though such pledges were somewhat hazardous in general; but mine was taken, and gave the prince much pleasure. If so, replied he, I select you for my agent with Lucretia; let her become

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acquainted with her triumph from your lips. He then put a box of jewels into my hand, worth fifty thousand crowns, with a message begging her acceptance of them, and promising more substantial proofs of his affection.

Before I went on this errand, I reported progress to my lord duke. That minister, I thought, would be more vexed than rejoiced at it; supposing that he had his own views of gallantry towards Lucretia, and would learn with regret the rivalship of his master; but I was mistaken. Far from appearing chagrined, his joy was so excessive that it would ooze out at his tongue in words which were not quite lost on the hearer. "Indeed, friend Philip! then I have you in my clutches: while your pleasures lead you, your business must be left to me!" This side speech explained to me the plot—an amorous prince, and a long-headed minister! My orders were to execute my commission as speedily as possible, with the assurance that the first lord in the land would be proud to stand in my shoes. Besides, there was no pimp of rank, as in the former case, to seize the profit and leave the infamy with me; the honor and emolument were now exclusively my own.

Thus did his excellency relish the ingredients of panderism to my palate; and I tasted them with the greediness, but not without the qualms, of an epicure; for since my imprisonment I had become regenerate, and did not take pride in dirty work, because my employer washed his hands in perfumed

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water. But though conscience was awake, interest was not asleep. I was no longer a villain for the fun of it; but my compliance would confirm my footing with the minister, and him it was my duty, at all events, to please.

My first appeal was to Laura in private. I opened the negotiation delicately, and presented my credentials in the form of the jewel-box. The lady was thrown off her guard by the display. Signor Gil Blas, cried she, you are one of my oldest friends, and I must not play the hypocrite: straitlaced morals are inconsistent with the discipline of my sect. Nothing can be more delightful to me than a conquest, which throws such a game into our hands. But, between ourselves, I am afraid Lucretia is not so enlightened as we are; though a daughter of Thalia, she has taken the better-behaved goddesses for her schoolmistresses, and given a rebuff to two young noblemen of amiable manners and large fortunes. They were not kings, you will say; and truly we may hope that Lucretia's virtue will be too undisciplined to stand a royal siege; but you must remember the event is hazardous, and I shall not interpose my authority to compel her. If, far from thinking herself honored by the fleeting passion of the king, she should revolt from his advances with disdain, let not our illustrious sovereign be offended at her reserve. But do you come back hither tomorrow, and carry back either the jewels or a return of affection.

I had no doubt but Laura would tutor Lucretia in

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the school of time-serving morality, and depended much on her instruction. It was therefore no small surprise to find that Laura worked as much against wind and tide to launch her daughter into the trade-wind of evil, as other maternal pilots to set the sails of theirs in the contrary monsoon of good; and what is still more unaccountable, Lucretia, after tasting of royal delights, was so completely surfeited with the banquet as to throw herself at once into the arms of the church, where she professed, fell sick, and died of grief. Laura, disconsolate for the loss of her daughter, and the part she herself had acted in the tragedy, retired into a convent of female penitents, and did penance for the unhallowed pleasures of her former life. The king was affected by his sudden loss, but soon found comfort in some other pursuit. The premier talked little on the subject, but thought so much the more, as the reader will easily believe.

CHAPTER IV.

SANTILLANE IN A NEW OFFICE.

My feelings were all alive to Lucretia's ill fate, and my own infamy in having contributed to it. The royal wants of the lover were no excuse for my taking the post of cheapener, and I determined to resign the staff of office in that department, entreating the minister to employ me in some other. He

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was charmed with my nice sense of honor, and promised to comply with my scruples, laying open his inmost heart in the following speech:—

Some years before I was in office, chance threw me across a lady of such shape and beauty as induced me to trace her home. I learned that she was a Genoese, by name Donna Margarita Spinola, supporting herself at Madrid on the income arising from her beauty. It was reported that Don Francisco de Valéasar, an officer about the court, a rich man, an old man, and a married man, laid out his money very freely on this hazardous speculation. These rumors ought to have deterred me; but they only whetted my desires to share with Valéasar. To gain my end, I had recourse to a female broker of tenderness, who adjusted the terms of a private interview with the Genoese; and the price current being settled, the traffic was frequently repeated; it was an open market for my rival and me, or possibly for many other bidders.

Let that be as it may, a choice boy was in the fulness of time produced to the club, and the mother complimented every member individually in private with the credit: but we were each of us too modest to acknowledge a bantling which had so probable a claim upon a better father; so that the Genoese was compelled to maintain him on the profits of her profession: this she did for eighteen years, and dying at the end of that period, has left her son without a farthing, and, what is worse, without an idea or an accomplishment.

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Such, continued his lordship, is the confidence I meant to repose in you, and I shall now lay open the great design I have formed to draw this unfortunate child from his obscurity, reverse the color of his fate, raise him to the highest honors, and acknowledge him as my son.

At so extravagant a project it was impossible not to be open-mouthed. What, sir, exclaimed I, can your excellency have adopted so strange a resolution? Excuse my freedom; but my zeal cannot restrain itself. You will be of my mind, replied he with eagerness, when I shall have explained to you my motives. I have no mind that my estates should descend in the collateral line. You will tell me, that I am not so old as to despair of having children by Madame d'Olivarez. But every one is best judge of his own condition: know therefore that there is not a receipt in the whole extent of chemistry which I have not tried, but without effect, to appear once again in the character of a father. Wherefore, since fortune, stepping in to cover the defects of nature, presents me with a child whose parent after all I may actually be, he is mine by adoption; that is a settled point.

When I found the minister determined, I no longer argued against his resolution, as knowing him to be a man who would rather do a foolish act of his own than adopt a wise suggestion of another. It only remains now, added he, to educate Don Henry Philip de Guzman; for by that name I intend him to be known in the world, till the time arrives when he may aspire to higher dignities. You, my dear San-

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tillane, I have chosen to superintend his conduct: I have full confidence in your talents and friendship, to regulate his household, direct his studies, and make him an accomplished gentleman. I would willingly have declined the office, as never having exercised the craft of a pedagogue, which required much more genius and solidity than mine; but he shut my mouth by saying it was his absolute determination that I should be tutor to this adopted son, whom he designed for the first offices of the monarchy. As a bribe for my compliance, his lordship increased my little income with a pension of a thousand crowns on the commandery of Mambra.

CHAPTER V.

THE SON OF THE GENOESE IS ACKNOWLEDGED BY A LEGAL INSTRUMENT, AND NAMED DON HENRY PHILIP DE GUZMAN. SANTILLANE ESTABLISHES HIS HOUSEHOLD, AND ARRANGES THE COURSE OF HIS STUDIES.

THE act of adoption was soon legalized with the king's consent and good pleasure. Don Henry Philip de Guzman, as this descendant from a committee of fathers was named, became acknowledged successor to the earldom of Olivarez and the duchy of San Lucar. The minister, to give the act all possible publicity, communicated it through Carnero to the ambassadors and grandees of Spain, who were somewhat startled. The jokers of Madrid were not in-

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sensible to the ridicule, and the satirical poets made their harvest of so fine a subject for their pen.

I asked my lord duke where my pupil was. Here in town, answered he, with an aunt from whom I shall remove him as soon as you have got a house ready. This I did immediately, and furnished it magnificently. When my establishment was complete in servants and officers, his excellency sent for this equivocal production, this spurious offset from the renowned stock of the Guzmans. The lad was tall and personable. Don Henry, said his lordship, pointing to me, this gentleman is to be your tutor, and introduce you into the world; he has my entire confidence, and an unlimited authority over you. After much good advice, and many compliments to me, the minister retired, and I took Don Henry home.

As soon as we got thither, I introduced him to his household, and explained the nature of each individual's employment. He did not seem at all disconcerted at the change of circumstances, but received the obeisances of his dependants as if he had been a lord by nature, and not by chance. He was not without mother-wit, but ignorant in a deplorable degree; he could scarcely read and write. I gave him masters for the Latin grammar, geography, history, and fencing. A dancing-master of course was not forgotten; but in an affair of the first consequence, selection was difficult, for there were more eminent professors of that art in Madrid than of all the languages and sciences put together.

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While I was pondering on this difficulty, a man gaudily dressed came into the court-yard and inquired for me. I went down, supposing him to be at least a knight of some military or privileged order. Signor de Santillane, said he, with a profusion of bows which anticipated his line in life, I am come to offer you my services as Don Henry's governor. My name is Martin Ligero, and I have, thank heaven, some reputation in the world. I have no occasion to canvass for scholars; that is all very well for petty dancing-masters! My custom is to wait till I am sent for; but being a sort of appendage to the house of Guzman, and having taught its various branches for a long period, I thought it a point of respect to wait on you first. I perceive, answered I, that you are just the man we want. What are your terms? Four double pistoles a month, answered he, and I give but two lessons a week. Four doubloons a month! cried I; that is an exorbitant price. Exorbitant! rejoined he with astonishment; why, it is not more than eight times as much as you would give to a mathematical master or a Greek professor.

There was no resisting so ludicrous a comparison of merit; I laughed outright, and asked Signor Ligero whether he really thought his talents worth more than those of the first proficients in learning and science. Most assuredly, said he; at least, if you measure our pretensions by their respective utility. What sort of machines may those be which are fashioned under their hands? Jointless puppets, unlicked cubs, open-mouthed and impenetrable shell-

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fish; but our lessons supple and render pliant the intractable stiffness of their component parts, and bring them insensibly into shape: in short, we communicate to them a graceful motion, a polite address, the carriage of good company, and the outward marks of elevated rank.

I could not but give way to such cogent arguments in favor of the dancing-master's occupation, and engaged him about Don Henry's person, without haggling as to terms, since those specified were only at the rate established by the leading professors of the art.

CHAPTER VI.

SCIPIO'S RETURN FROM NEW SPAIN. GIL BLAS PLACES HIM ABOUT DON HENRY'S PERSON. THAT YOUNG NOBLEMAN'S COURSE OF STUDY. HIS CAREER OF HONOR, AND HIS FATHER'S MATRIMONIAL SPECULATION ON HIS BEHALF. A PATENT OF NOBILITY CONFERRED ON GIL BLAS AGAINST HIS WILL.

I HAD not yet half arranged Don Henry's household, when Scipio returned from Mexico. He brought with him three thousand ducats in cash, and merchandise to double the amount. I wish you joy, said I; the foundation of your fortune is laid; and if you prefer a snug berth at Madrid to the risk of going back, you have only to tell me so. There is no question about that, said the son of Coscliña: a genteel situation at home is far preferable to a second voyage.

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After relating the birth and adventures of the little adopted Guzman, and my own appointment as tutor, I offered him the situation of upper servant to this babe of chance: Scipio, who could have devised nothing better for himself, readily accepted the office, and within the small space of three or four days got the length of his new master's foot.

I had taken it for granted that the verb-grinders and concord-manufacturers to whom I had given the plant of this Genoese bastard would lose stock and block, under the idea that he was of an intractable and profitless age; but my forebodings were completely reversed. He not only comprehended, but easily retained the lessons of his masters, and they were very well satisfied with him. I was in an enormous hurry to greet the ears of my lord duke with this intelligence, and he received it with abundant joy. Santillane, exclaimed he with delight, you give me new life by the assurance of Don Henry's capacity and application: it runs in the blood of the Guzmans; and I am the more confirmed in his being unquestionably my own, because I am just as fond of him as if Madame d'Olivarez herself had lain in of the brat in due form under this very roof. The voice of nature, you perceive, will make itself heard. I thought it unnecessary to give his lordship any opinion on that subject; but with a delicate deference to his credulity, left him to enjoy his fancied paternity in peace, whether well or ill founded.

Though all the Guzmans held this clod of newly turned up nobility in utter scorn, they were politic

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enough to smooth over the corrugations of their contempt; nay, some of them even affected to languish for his good opinion; the ambassadors and principal nobility then at Madrid waited on him with all the ceremony appertaining to the rank of a legitimate son. The minister, intoxicated with the fumes of incense offered to his idol, began to build a temple worthy of the worship. The cross of Alcantara was the foundation, with a commandery of ten thousand crowns. The next step was to a high office in the royal household, and the completion of the whole was matrimony. Wishing to connect him with a family of the first rank, he picked out Donna Johanna de Velasco, daughter to the Duke of Castile, and had influence enough to accomplish the alliance, though against the will of the duke and of all his kindred.

Some days before the nuptial ceremony, his lordship put some papers into my hand, saying, Here, Gil Blas, is a patent of nobility which I have procured as the reward of your services. My lord, answered I, in much astonishment, your excellency knows very well that I am the son of an usher and a duenna: it would be caricaturing the peerage to confer it on me; and besides, of all the boons in his majesty's power to bestow, it is that which I deserve and desire the least. Your birth, replied the minister, is a slight objection. You have been employed on affairs of state under the Duke of Lerma's administration and under mine: besides, added he with a smile, have you not rendered some things to Cæsar

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which Cæsar is bound, on the honor of a prince, to render back in another shape? To deal candidly, Santillane, you will make just as good a lord as the best of them; nay, more than that, your high office about my son is incompatible with plebeian rank, and therefore have I procured you to be created. Since your excellency will have it so, replied I, there is no more to be said. So, saying no more, I put my new-blown honors in my pocket, and walked off.

Now can I make any Joan a lady! said I to myself when I had got into the street: but it was not the handiwork of my parents that made me a gentleman. I may add a foot of honor to my name whenever I please; and if any of my acquaintance should snuff or snigger when they call me Don, I may suck my teeth, lean upon my elbow, and draw out my credentials of heraldry. But let us see what they contain, and how the corporeal particles, which have accrued during my artificial contact with the court, are distinguished by genealogical metaphysics from the native clay of my original extraction. The instrument ran thus in substance: That the king, in acknowledgment of my zeal in more than one instance for his service and the good of the state, had been graciously pleased to confer this mark of distinction on me: I may safely say that the recollection of the act for which I was promoted effectually kept down my pride. Neither did the bashfulness of low birth ever forsake me, so that nobility to me was like a hair shirt to a penitent: I determined therefore to

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lock up the evidences of my shame in a private drawer, instead of blazoning them to dazzle the eyes of the foolish and corrupt.

CHAPTER VII.

AN ACCIDENTAL MEETING BETWEEN GIL BLAS AND FABRICIO. THEIR LAST CONVERSATION TOGETHER, AND A WORD TO THE WISE FROM NUNEZ.

THE poet of the Asturias, as the reader, if he thought of him, may have remarked, was very negligent in his intercourse with me. It was not to be expected that my employments would leave me time to go and look after him. I had not seen him since the critical discussion touching the Iphigenia of Euripides, when chance threw me across him, as he came out of a printing-house. I accosted him, saying, So! so! Master Nunez, you have got among the printers: this looks as if we were threatened with some new production.

You may indeed prepare yourselves for such an event, answered he: I have a pamphlet just ready for publication which is likely to make some noise in the literary world. There can be no question about its merit, replied I; but I cannot conceive why you waste your time in writing pamphlets: it should seem as if such squibs and rockets were scarcely worth the powder expended in their manufacture. It is very true, rejoined Fabricio: and I am well

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aware that none but the most vulgar gazers are caught by such holiday fireworks; however, this single one has escaped me, and I must own that it is a child of necessity. Hunger, as you know, will bring the wolf out of the forest.

What! exclaimed I, is it the author of the "Count of Saldagna" who holds this language? A man with an annuity of two thousand crowns? Gently, my friend, interrupted Nunez: I am no longer a pensioned poet. The affairs of the treasurer Don Bertrand are all at sixes and sevens: he has been at the gaming table, and played with the public money: an extent has issued, and my rent-charge is gone posthaste to the devil. That is a sad affair, said I; but may not matters come round again in that quarter? No chance of it, answered he: Signor Gomez del Ribero, in plight as destitute as that of his poor bard, is sunk forever; nor can he, as they say, by any possible contrivance be set afloat again.

In that case, my good friend, replied I, we must look out for some post which may make you amends for the loss of your annuity. I will ease your conscience on that score, said he: though you should offer me the wealth of the Indies as a salary in one of your offices, I would reject the boon: clerkships are no object to a partner in the firm of the Muses; a literary berth or absolute starvation for your humble servant! If you must have it plump, I was born to live and die a poet, and the man whose destiny is hanging will never be drowned.

But do not suppose, continued he, that we are

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altogether forlorn and destitute: besides that we accommodate the requisites of independence to our finances, we do not look far beyond our noses in calculating the average of our fortunes. It is insinuated that we often dine with the most abstemious orders of the religious; but our sanctity in this particular is too credulously imputed. There is not one of my brother wits, without excepting the calculators of almanacs, who has not a plate laid for him at some substantial table: for my own part, I have the run of two good houses. To the master of one I have dedicated a romance; and he is the first commissioner of taxes who was ever associated with the Muses: the other is a rich tradesman in Madrid, whose lust is to get wits about him; he is not nice in his choice, and this town furnishes abundance to those who value wit more by quantity than quality.

Then I no longer feel for you, said I to the poet of the Asturias, since you are satisfied in your condition. But be that as it may, I assure you once more, that you have a friend in Gil Blas, however you may slight him: if you want my purse, come and take it: it will not fail you at a pinch; and you must not stand between me and my sincere friendship.

By that burst of sentiment, exclaimed Nunez, I know and thank my friend Santillane: in return, let me give you a salutary caution. While my lord duke is in his meridian, and you are all in all with him, reap, bind, and gather in your harvest: when the sun sets, the gleaners are sent home. I asked

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Fabricio whether his suspicions were surely founded, and he returned me this answer: My information comes from an old knight of Calatrava, who pokes his nose into secrets of all sorts; his authority passes current at Madrid, much as that of the Pythian newsmongers did through Greece; and thus his oracle was pronounced in my hearing: My lord duke has a host of enemies in battle array against him; he reckons too securely upon his influence with the king; for his majesty, as the report goes, begins to take in hostile representations with patience. I thanked Nunez for his friendly warning, but without much faith in his prediction: my master's authority seemed rooted in the court, like the tempest-scoffing firmness of an oak in the native soil of the forest.

CHAPTER VIII.

GIL BLAS FINDS THAT FABRICIO'S HINT WAS NOT WITHOUT FOUNDATION. THE KING'S JOURNEY TO SARAGOSSA.

The poet of the Asturias was no bad politician. There was a court plot against the duke, with the queen at the bottom; but their plans were too deeply laid to bubble at the surface. During the space of a whole year, my simplicity was insensible to the brewing of the tempest.

The revolt of the Catalans, with France at their back, and the ill success of the war for their suppression, excited the murmurs of the people, and whetted

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their tongues against government. A council was held in the royal presence, and the Marquis de Grana, the emperor's ambassador, was specially requested to assist. The subject in debate was whether the king should remain in Castile, or go and take the command of his troops in Arragon. The minister spoke first, and gave it as his opinion that his majesty should not quit the seat of government. All the members supported his arguments, with the exception of the Marquis de Grana, whose whole heart was with the house of Austria, and the sentiments of his soul on the tip of his tongue, after the homely honesty of his nation. He argued so forcibly against the minister, that the king embraced his opinion from conviction, though contrary to the vote of council, and fixed the day when he would set out for the army.

This was the first time that ever the sovereign had differed from his favorite, and the latter considered it as an inexpiable affront. Just as the minister was withdrawing to his closet, there to bite upon the bridle, he espied me, called me in, and told me with much discomposure what had passed in debate: Yes, Santillane, observed he, the king, who for the last twenty years has spoken only through my mouth, and seen with my eyes, is now to be wheedled over by Grana; and that on the score of zeal for the house of Austria, as if that German had a more Austrian soul in his body than myself.

Hence it is easy to perceive, continued the minister, that there is a strong party against me, with the

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queen at the head. Heaven forbid it, said I. Has not the queen for upwards of twelve years been accustomed to your paramount authority, and have you not taught the king the knack of not consulting her? The desire of making a campaign may for once have enlisted his majesty on the side of the Marquis de Grana. Say rather that the king, argued my lord duke, will be surrounded by his principal officers when in camp; and then the disaffected will find their opportunity for poisoning him against my administration. But they overreach themselves; for I shall completely insulate the prince from all their approaches; and so he did, in a manner which, for example, deserves not to be passed over.

The day of the king's departure being arrived, the monarch, leaving the queen regent, proceeded for Saragossa by way of Aranjuez; a delightful residence, where he whiled away three weeks. Cuença was the next stage, where the minister detained him still longer by a succession of amusements. A hunting party was contrived at Molina in Arragon, and hence there was no choice of road but to Saragossa. The army was near at hand, and the king was preparing to review it: but his keeper sickened him of the project, by making him believe that he would be taken by the French, who were in force in the neighborhood, so that he was cowed by a groundless apprehension, and consented to be a prisoner in his own court. The minister, from an affectionate regard to his safety, secluded him from all approach; so that

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the principal nobility, who had equipped themselves at enormous charges to be about his person, could not even procure an occasional audience. Philip, weary of bad lodgings and worse recreation at Saragossa, and perhaps feeling himself scarcely his own master, soon returned to Madrid. Thus ended the royal campaign, and the care of maintaining the honor of the Spanish colors was left to the Marquis de los Velez, commander-in-chief.

CHAPTER IX.

THE REVOLUTION OF PORTUGAL, AND DISGRACE OF THE PRIME MINISTER.

A FEW days after the king's return, an alarming report prevailed at Madrid, that the Portuguese, considering the Catalan revolt as an opportunity offered them by fortune for throwing off the Spanish yoke, had taken arms, and chosen the Duke of Braganza for their king, with a full determination of supporting him on the throne. In this they conceived that they did not reckon without their host, because Spain was then embroiled in Germany, Italy, Flanders, and Catalonia. They could not, in fact, have hit upon a crisis more favorable for their deliverance from so galling a yoke.

It was a strange circumstance, that while both court and city were struck with consternation at the

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news, my lord duke attempted to joke with the king, and make the Duke of Braganza his butt: Philip, however, far from falling in with this ill-timed pleasantry, assumed a serious air, of ill omen to the minister, who felt his seat to totter under him. The queen was now his declared enemy, and openly accused him of having caused the revolt of Portugal by his misconduct. The nobility in general, and especially those who had been at Saragossa, when they saw a cloud gathering about the minister, joined the queen's party:* but the decisive blow was the return of the duchess dowager of Mantua from her government of Portugal to Madrid, for she proved clearly to the king's conviction that the counsels of his own cabinet produced the revolution.

His Majesty, deeply impressed with what he had heard, was now completely recovered from every symptom of partiality towards his favorite. The minister, finding that his enemies were in possession of the royal ear, wrote for permission to resign his employments, and retire from court, since all the political mischances of the time were ascribed to his personal delinquency. He expected a letter like this to produce a wonderful effect, reckoning as he did upon the prince's private friendship, which could scarcely brook a separation: but his majesty's answer undeceived him, by laconically complying with his ostensible wish to withdraw.

* At length his sovereign frowns — the train of state
Mark the keen glance, and watch the sign to hate.
Johnson's Imitation of Juvenal's Tenth Satire.

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Such a sentence of banishment in the king's own handwriting came like a thunder-storm in harvest; but though destruction to his long-cherished hopes, he affected the serene look of constancy, and asked me what I would do in his circumstances. I would drive before the wind, said I; renounce the ungrateful court, and pass the remainder of my days in peace on my own estate. You counsel wisely, replied my master, and I shall set out for Loeches, there to finish my career, after one more interview with his majesty, for I could wish just to convince him that I have done what man can do to support the heavy load of state upon my shoulders, and that it was not within the compass of possibility to prevent the unfortunate events which are imputed to me as a crime. It were equally reasonable to charge the pilot with the wrecking fury of the storm, and make him answerable for the uncontrolled power of the elements. Thus did the minister inwardly flatter himself that he could set things to rights again, and once more fix firm the seat which was shaking under him; but he could not procure an audience, and was even commanded to resign his key of private admission into his majesty's closet.

This last requisition convinced him that there was no hope, and he now made up his mind in earnest for retirement. He looked over his papers, and had the prudence to burn a good number; he then selected a small household for his retreat, and publicly announced his departure for the next day. Apprehending insult from the mob, if the time and

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manner of his setting out were public, he escaped early in the morning through the kitchens out at the back door, got into a shabby, hired carriage, with his confessor and me, and reached in safety the road leading to Loeches, a village on his own estate, where his countess had founded a magnificent convent of Dominican nuns.

CHAPTER X.

A DIFFICULT, BUT SUCCESSFUL WEANING FROM THE WORLD. THE MINISTER'S EMPLOYMENTS IN HIS RETREAT.

MADAME D'OLIVAREZ staid behind her husband some few days, with the intention of trying what her tears and entreaties might do towards his recall; but in vain did she prostrate herself before their majesties; the king paid not the least attention to her pleadings and remonstrances, though artfully adapted for effect; and the queen, who hated her mortally, took a savage pleasure in her tears. The minister's lady, however, was not easily discouraged: she stooped so low as to solicit their good offices from the ladies of the bed-chamber; but the fruit of all this meanness was only the sad conviction that it excited more contempt than pity. Heart-broken at having degraded herself by supplications so humiliating, and yet so unavailing, she departed to her husband, and mourned with him the loss of a situa-

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tion, which, under a reign like that of Philip the Fourth, was little short of sovereign power.

The accounts her ladyship brought from Madrid were wormwood to the duke. Your enemies, said she, sobbing, with the Duke of Medina Celi at their head, are loud in the king's praises for your removal; and the people triumph in your disgrace with an insolent joy, as if the cloud of adversity were to be dispelled by the breath which dissolved your administration. Madam, said my master, follow my example; suppress your discontent; we must drive before the storm when we cannot weather it. I did think, indeed, that my favor would only be eclipsed with the lamp of life—a common illusion of ministers and favorites, who forget that they breathe but at the good pleasure of their sovereign. Was not the Duke of Lerma as much mistaken as myself, though fondly relying on his purple, as a pledge for the lasting tenure of his authority?

Thus did my lord duke preach patience to the partner of his cares, while his own bosom heaved under the direct pressure of anxiety. The frequent despatches from Don Henry, who was staying about the court to pick up information, kept him continually on the fret. Scipio was the messenger; for he was still about the person of that young nobleman, though I had relinquished my post on his marriage. Sometimes we heard of changes in the inferior departments of office, solely for the purpose of wreaking vengeance on his creatures, and filling up the vacancies with his enemies. Then Don Lewis de

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Haro was represented as advancing in favor, and likely to be made prime minister. But the most mortifying circumstance of all was the change in the viceroyalty of Naples, which was taken from his friend, the Duke de Medina de las Torres, and bestowed on the High Admiral of Castile, who was his bitterest enemy. For this there was no other motive but the pleasure of giving pain to a fallen favorite.

For the first three months, his lordship gave himself up in his solitude a prey to disappointment and regret; but his confessor, a holy and pious Dominican, supporting his religious zeal with manly eloquence, succeeded in pouring the balm of consolation into his soul. By continually representing to him, with apostolic energy, that his eternal salvation was now the only object worth his care, he weaned him gradually from the uses of this world. His excellency was no longer panting for news from Madrid, but learning a new and important lesson, how to die. Madame d'Olivarez too, making a virtue of necessity, sought refuge for herself in the maternal guardianship of her convent, where Providence had reared up, for her edification in faith and good works, a sisterhood of holy maidens, whose spiritual discourses fed her soul, as if with manna in the wilderness. My master's peace within his own bosom advanced, as he withdrew more backward from sublunary things. The employment of his day was thus laid out: almost the whole morning was devoted to religious duties till dinner-time, and after dinner, for about

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two hours, he played at different games with me and some of his confidential domestics; he then generally retired alone into his closet till sunset, when he walked round his garden, or rode out into the neighborhood either with his confessor or me.

One day when I was alone with him, and was particularly struck with his apparent self-complacency, I took the liberty of congratulating his lordship on his complete reconciliation to retirement. Use, however late acquired, is second nature, answered he; for though I have all my life been accustomed to the bustle of business, I assure you that I become every day more and more attached to this calm and peaceful mode of life.

CHAPTER XI.

A CHANGE IN HIS LORDSHIP FOR THE WORSE. THE MARVELLOUS CAUSE, AND MELANCHOLY CONSEQUENCES, OF HIS DEJECTION.

His excellency sometimes amused himself with gardening, by way of variety. One day, as I was watching his progress, he said, jokingly, You see, Santillane, a fallen minister can turn gardener at last. Nature will prevail, my lord, answered I. You plant and water something useful at Loeches, while Dionysius of Syracuse whipped school-boys at Corinth. My master was not displeased either with the comparison or the compliment.

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We were all delighted at the castle to see our protector, rising above the cloud of adversity, take pleasure in so novel a mode of life: but we soon perceived an alarming change. He became gloomy, thoughtful, and melancholy. Our parties at play were all given up, and no efforts could succeed to divert his mind. From dinner-time till evening he never left his closet. We thought the dreams of vanished greatness had returned to break his rest; and in this opinion the reverend Dominican gave the rein to his eloquence; but it could not outstrip the course of that hypochondriac malady, which triumphed over all opposition.

It seemed to me there was some deeper cause, which it behooved a sincere friend to fathom. Taking advantage of our being alone together, My lord, said I, in a tone of mingled respect and affection, whence is it that you are no longer so cheerful as heretofore? Has your philosophy lost ground? or has the world recovered its allurements? Surely you would not plunge again into that gulf where your virtue must inevitably be shipwrecked! No, heaven be praised! replied the minister: my part at court has long faded from my memory, and its trappings from my eyes. Indeed! why, then, resumed I, since you have strength enough to banish false regrets, are you so weak as to indulge a melancholy which alarms us all? What is the matter with you, my dear master? continued I, falling at his knees: some secret sorrow preys upon you: can you hide it from Santillane, whose zeal, discretion, and fidelity

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you have so often experienced? Why am I so unhappy as to have lost your confidence?

You still possess it, said his lordship: but I must own, it is reluctantly that I shall reveal the subject of my distress; yet the importunities of such a friend are irresistible. To no one else could I impart so singular a confidence. Yes, I am the prey of a morbid melancholy which eats inwardly into my vitals: a spectre haunts me every moment, arrayed in the most terrific form of preternatural horror. In vain have I argued with myself that it is a vision of the brain, an unreal mockery: its continual presentments blast my sight, and unseat my reason. Though my understanding teaches me, that in looking on this spectre I stare at vacancy, my spirits are too weak to derive comfort from the conviction. Thus much have you extorted from me; now judge whether the cause of my melancholy is fit to be divulged.

With equal grief and astonishment did I listen to the strange confession, which implied a total derangement of the nervous system. This, my lord, said I, must proceed from injudicious abstinence. So I thought at first, answered he; and to try the experiment, I have been eating more than usual for some days past; but it is all to no purpose; the phantom takes his stand as usual. It will vanish, said I, if your excellency will only divert your mind by your accustomed relaxations with your household. Company and gentle occupation are the best remedies for these affections of the spirits.

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In a short time after this conversation, his lordship became seriously indisposed, and sent for two notaries from Madrid, to make his will. Three capital physicians followed in their track, who had the reputation of curing their patients now and then. As soon as it was noised about the castle that these last undertakers were arrived, the case was given up for lost; weeping and gnashing of teeth took place universally, and the family mourning was ordered. They brought with them their usual understrappers, an apothecary and a surgeon.* The notaries were suffered to earn their fee first, after which, death's notaries prepared to take a bond of the patient. They practised in the school of Sangrado, and from their very first consultation, ordered bleeding so frequently and freely, that in six days they brought his lordship to the point of death, and on the seventh delivered him from the terror of his sprite.

After the minister's decease, a lively and sincere sorrow reigned in the castle of Loeches. The whole household wept bitterly. Far from deriving consolation from the certainty of being remembered in his will, there was not a dependant who would not willingly have saved his life by the sacrifice of the legacy. As for me, whom he most delighted in,

* Behind him sneaks
Another mortal, not unlike himself,
Of jargon full, with terms obscure o'ercharged,
Apothecary called, whose fetid hands
With power mechanic, and with charms arcane,
Apollo, god of medicine, has endued.

BRAMSTON.

attached to him as I was from disinterested friendship, my grief was more acute than that of the rest. I question whether Antonia cost me more tears.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PROCEEDINGS AT THE CASTLE OF LORCHES AFTER HIS LORDSHIP'S DEATH, AND THE COURSE WHICH SANTILLANE ADOPTED.

The minister, according to his last injunctions, was buried without pomp and without procession in the convent, with a dirge of our lamentations. After the funeral, Madame d'Olivarez called us together to hear the will read, with which the household had good reason to be satisfied. Every one had a legacy proportioned to his claim, and none less than two thousand crowns: mine was the largest, amounting to ten thousand pistoles, as a mark of his singular regard. The hospitals were not forgotten, and provision was made for an annual commemoration in several convents.

Madame d'Olivarez sent all the household to Madrid to receive their legacies from Don Raymond Caporis, who had orders to pay them; but I could not be of the party, in consequence of a violent fever from distress of mind, which confined me to the castle for more than a week. During that time, the reverend Dominican paid me all possible attention. He had conceived a friendship for me, which was not con-

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fined to my worldly interests, and was anxious to know how I meant to dispose of myself on my recovery. I answered that I had not yet made up my mind upon the subject: there were moments when my feelings strongly prompted towards a religious vow. Precious moments! exclaimed the Dominican, you will do well to profit by them. I advise you as a friend to retire to our convent at Madrid, for example; there to become a pious benefactor by the free gift of your whole fortune, and to die in the livery of St. Dominic. Many very questionable Christians have made amends for a life of sin by so holy an end.

In the actual disposition of my mind, this advice was not unpalatable; and I promised to reflect upon it. But on consulting Scipio, who came to see me immediately after the monk, he treated the very notion as the phantom of a distempered brain. For shame! said he; does not your estate at Lirias offer a more eligible seclusion? If you were delighted with it formerly, the charm will be increased tenfold, now that the lapse of years has moderated your sense of pleasure, and softened down your taste to the simple beauties of nature.

It was no difficult matter to operate a change in my inclinations. My friend, said I, you carry it decidedly against the advocate of St. Dominic. We will go back to Lirias as soon as I am well enough to travel. This happened shortly; for as the fever subsided, I soon felt myself sufficiently strong to put my design in execution. We went first to Madrid.

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The sight of that city gave me far other sensations than heretofore. As I knew that almost its whole population held in horror the memory of a minister of whom I cherished the most affectionate remembrance, I could not feel at my ease within its precincts. My stay was therefore limited to five or six days, while Scipio was making the necessary arrangements for our rustication. In the mean time, I waited on Caporis, and received my legacy in ready money. I likewise made my arrangements with the receivers for the regular remittance of my pensions, and settled all my affairs in due order.

The evening before our departure, I asked the son of Cosclina whether he had received his farewell from Don Henry. Yes, answered he; we took leave of each other this morning with mutual civility: he went so far as to express his regret that I should quit him; but however well satisfied he might be with me, I am by no means so with him. Mutual content is like a river, which must have its banks on either side. Besides, Don Henry makes but a pitiful figure at court now; he has fallen into utter contempt; people point at him with their finger in the streets, and call him a Genoese bastard. Judge, then, for yourself, whether it is consistent with my character to keep up the connection.

We left Madrid one morning at sunrise, and went for Cuença. The following was the order of our equipment: we two in a chaise and pair, three mules, laden with baggage and money, led by two grooms and two stout footmen, well armed, in the

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rear; the grooms wore sabres, and the postilion had a pair of pistols in his holsters. As we were seven men in all, and six of us determined fellows, I took the road gayly, without trembling for my legacy. In the villages through which we passed our mules chimed their bells merrily, and the peasants ran to their doors to see us pass, supposing it to be at least the parade of some nobleman going to take possession of some viceroyalty.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE RETURN OF GIL BLAS TO HIS SEAT. HIS JOY AT FINDING HIS GODDAUGHTER SERAPHINA MARRIAGEABLE; AND HIS OWN SECOND VENTURE IN THE LOTTERY OF LOVE.

We were a fortnight on our journey to Lirias, having no occasion to make rapid stages. The sight of my own domain brought melancholy thoughts into my mind, with the image of my lost Antonia; but better topics of reflection came to my aid, with a full purpose to look at things on the brighter side, and the lapse of two-and-twenty years, which had gradually impaired the force of tender regret.

As soon as I entered the castle, Beatrice and her daughter greeted me most cordially, while the family scene was interesting in the extreme. When their mutual transports were over, I looked earnestly at my goddaughter, saying, Can this be the Seraphina whom I left in her cradle? How tall and pretty! We

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must make a good match for her. What! my dear godfather, cried my little girl, with an enchanting blush, you have but just seen me, and do you want to get rid of me at once? No, my lovely child, replied I, we hope not to lose you by marriage, but to find a husband for you in the neighborhood.

There is one ready to your hands, said Beatrice. Seraphina made a conquest one day at mass. Her suitor has declared his passion, and asked my consent. I told him that his acceptance depended on her father and her godfather; and here you are to determine for yourselves.

What is the character of this village lordling? said Scipio. Is he not, like his fellows, the little tyrant of the soil, and insolent to those who have no pedigree to boast? The furthest from it in the world, answered Beatrice; the young man is gentle in his temper and polished in his manners; handsome withal, and somewhat under thirty. You paint him in flattering colors, said I to Beatrice; what is his name? Don Juan de Jutella, replied Scipio's wife: it is not long since he came to his inheritance: he lives on his own estate, about a mile off, with a younger sister, of whom he takes care. I once knew something of his family, observed I; it is one of the best in Valencia. I care less for lineage, cried Scipio, than for the qualities of the heart and mind; this Don Juan will exactly suit us, if he is a good sort of man. He is belied else, said Seraphina, with a blushing interest in our conversation; the inhabitants of Lirias, who know him well, say all

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the good of him you can conceive. I smiled at this; and her father, not less quick-sighted, saw plainly that her heart had a share in the testimony of her tongue.

The gentleman soon heard of our arrival, and paid his respects to us within two days. His address was pleasing and manly, so as to prepossess us in his favor. He affected merely to welcome us home as a neighbor. Our reception was such as not to discourage the repetition of his visit; but not a word of Seraphina! When he was gone, Beatrice asked us how we liked him. We could have no objection to make, and gave it as our opinion that Seraphina could not dispose of herself better.

The next day, Scipio and I returned the visit. We took a guide, and luckily; for otherwise it might have puzzled us to find the place. It was not till our actual arrival that it was visible; for the mansion was situated at the foot of a mountain, in the middle of a wood, whose lofty trees hid it from our view. There was an antique and ruinous appearance about it, which spoke more for the descent than the wealth of its proprietor. On our entrance, however, the elegance of the interior arrangement made amends for the dilapidated grandeur of the outer walls.

Don Juan received us in a handsome room, where he introduced his sister Dorothea, a lady between nineteen and twenty years of age. She was a good deal tricked out, as if she had primed and loaded herself for conquest, in expectation of our visit.

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Thus presenting all her charms in full force, she did by me much as Antonia had done before; but I managed my raptures so discreetly, that even Scipio had no suspicion. Our conversation turned, as on the preceding day, on the mutual pleasure of good neighborhood. Still he did not open on the subject of Seraphina, nor did we attempt to draw him out. During our interview, I often cast a side glance at Dorothea, though with all the reserve of delicate apprehension; whenever our eyes met, the citadel of my heart was ready to surrender. To describe the object of my love justly, as well as feelingly, her beauty was not of the most perfect kind: her skin was of a dazzling whiteness, and her lips united the color with the fragrance of the rose; but her features were not so regular and well proportioned as might have been wished: yet, altogether, she won my heart.

In short, I left the mansion of Jutella a different man from what I was on entering it: so that, returning to Lirias with my whole soul absorbed in Dorothea, I saw and spoke only of her. How is this, master? said Scipio with a look of astonishment: you seem to be very much taken with Don Juan's sister! Can you be in love with her? Yes, my friend, answered I: to my shame be it spoken. Since the death of Antonia, how many lovely females have passed in review before me with indifference! and must my passions be irresistibly kindled at this time of life? Indeed, sir, replied the son of Coscliña, you may bless your stars, instead of squab-

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bling with yourself: you are not so old as to make your sacrifice at the shrine of love a by-word; and time has not yet ploughed such furrows on your brow as to render hopeless the desire of pleasing. When you see Don Juan next, ask him boldly for his sister: he cannot refuse her to you; and besides, if his views in her settlement are ambitious, how can he do better? You have a patent of nobility in your pocket, and upon that your posterity may ride easy; after five generations, when pedigree herself shall be lost in the confusion of her materials, it may exercise the diligence of learned inquiry to trace the family of the Santillanes to the beginning of its archives, and consecrate the fame of its founder by the indistinctness of his story.

CHAPTER XIV.

A DOUBLE MARRIAGE, AND THE CONCLUSION OF THE HISTORY.

By this discourse, Scipio encouraged me to declare myself, without considering how he exposed me to the danger of a refusal. My own resolution was taken with fear and trembling. Though I carried my years well, and might have sunk at least ten, it did not seem unlikely that a young beauty might turn up her nose at the disparity. I determined, however, to bolt the question the first time I saw her brother, who was not without his trepidations on the subject of my goddaughter.

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He returned my call the next morning, just as I had done dressing. Signor de Santillane, said he; I wish to speak with you on some serious business. I took him into my closet, where entering on the subject at once, I imagine, continued he, that you are not unacquainted with the purpose of my visit: I love Seraphina; you are all in all with her father; I must request you therefore to intercede and procure for me the accomplishment of my heart's desire; then shall I have to thank you for the prime bliss of my existence. Signor Don Juan, answered I, as you come to the point at once, you can have no objection to my following your example: My good offices are fully at your service, and I shall hope for yours with your sister in return.

Don Juan was agreeably surprised. Can it be possible, exclaimed he, that Dorothea should have made a conquest of your heart since yesterday? It is even so, said I, and it would make me the happiest of men if the proposal should meet with your joint approbation. You may rely on that, replied he; though with some pretensions to family pride, yours is not an alliance to be despised. You flatter me highly, rejoined I; that you are not mealy-mouthed about receiving a commoner into your pedigree is a mark of good sense; but even if nobility had been a necessary ingredient in your sister's requisites for a husband, we should not have quarrelled on that account. I have worked out twenty years in the trammels of office; and the king, as a reward of my long labors, has granted me a patent

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of nobility. This high-minded gentleman read my credentials over with extreme satisfaction, and returning them, told me that Dorothea was mine. And Seraphina yours, exclaimed I.

Thus were the two marriages agreed on between us. The consent of the intended brides was all that remained; for we neither of us presumed to control the inclinations of our wards. My friend therefore carried home my proposal to his sister, and I called Scipio, Beatrice, and my goddaughter together, for the purpose of laying open a similar project. Beatrice voted loudly for immediate acceptance, and Seraphina silently. The father did not say much against it, but boggled a little at the fortune he must give to a gentleman whose seat required such immediate and extensive repairs. I stopped Scipio's mouth by telling him that was my concern, and that I should contribute four thousand pistoles to the architect's estimate.

In the evening, Don Juan came again. Your business is going swimmingly, said I; pray heaven mine may promise as fairly. Better it cannot, answered he; my influence was quite unnecessary to prevail with Dorothea; your person had made its impression, and your manners pleased her. You were afraid she might not like you; while she, with more reason, having nothing to offer you but her heart and hand . . . What would she offer more? interrupted I, out of my wits with joy. Since the lovely Dorothea can think of me without repugnance, I ask no more: my fortune is ample, and the possession of her is the only dowry I should value.

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Don Juan and myself, highly delighted at having brought our views to bear so soon, were for hastening our nuptials, and cutting off all superfluous ceremonies. I closeted the gentleman with Seraphina's parents; the settlements were soon agreed on, and he took his leave, promising to return next day with Dorothea. My eager desire of appearing agreeable in that lady's eyes occasioned me to spend three hours at least in adjusting my dress, and communicating the air of a lover to my person; but I could not do it so much to my mind as in my younger days. The preparations for courtship are a pleasure to a young man, but a serious business and hazardous speculation to one who is beginning to be oldish. And yet it turned out better than my hopes or deserts; for Don Juan's sister received me so graciously as to put me in good humor with myself. I was charmed with the turn of her mind, and foreboded that, with discreet management and much deference, I might really get her to like me as well as anybody else. Full of this sweet hope, I sent for the lawyers to draw up the two contracts, and for the clergyman of Paterna to bring us better acquainted with our mistresses.

Thus did I light the torch of Hymen for the second time, and it did not burn blue with the brimstone of repentance. Dorothea, like a virtuous wife, made a pleasure of her duty; in gratitude for the pains I took to anticipate all her wishes, she soon loved me as well as if I had been younger. Don Juan and my goddaughter were most enthusiastic in

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their mutual ardor; and what was most unprecedented of all, the two sisters-in-law loved one another sincerely. Don Juan was a man in whom all good qualities met: my esteem for him increased daily, and he did not repay it with ingratitude. In short, we were a happy and united family: we could scarcely bear the interval of separation between evening and morning. Our time was divided between Lirias and Jutella: his excellency's pistoles made the old battlements to raise their heads again, and the castle to resume its lordly port.

For these three years, reader, I have led a life of unmixed bliss in this beloved society. To perfect my satisfaction, heaven has deigned to send me two smiling babes, whose education will be the amusement of my declining years; and if ever husband might venture to hazard so bold an hypothesis, I devoutly believe myself their father.

THE END.

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